

Hafa Adai!

King-Hinds speaks of women's capabilities. **PAGE 2**

Muna's rubber ducky rules the roost in PIC's Duck Race. **PAGE 3**

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IN INVESTIGATION INTO INMATE'S ESCAPE

Torres proposes to suspend 2 DOC officers

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
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REPORTER



Torres

Corrections Commissioner Anthony Torres has proposed that the two officers who were

on guard when an inmate escaped while being treated at the Commonwealth Health Center last Jan. 24 be suspended.

See **TORRES** on Page 4

Manglona, King-Nabors to seek re-election, DeLeon Guerrero to run as independent for undecided seat

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

for which seat.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry, Manglona said Gov. Arnold I. Palacios is trying to help Rota and he wants to help Palacios with that.

Manglona has been a Rota senator for a total of 36 years.

King-Nabors said he is also running but has yet to decide

See **MANGLONA** on Page 4

Sens. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian) will both be seeking re-election this November, while Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) will be



Manglona

running but has yet to decide



Terlaje: A lot of times CUC does 'band aid' approach

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

In this screen grab from a YouTube video, acting Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Betty G. Terlaje discusses the CNMI government's combined \$77.8-million utility billing arrears before a Senate special committee in the Senate chamber yesterday. To Terlaje's right is acting CUC chief financial officer Rodolfo Urbano, and to her left is CUC deputy executive director for water and wastewater division Kevin Watson.

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

With the CNMI government's combined unpaid Commonwealth Utilities

Corp. utility bills now reaching \$77.8 million, CUC is often forced to make a lot of sacrifices and do a "band aid" approach due to lack of funds to repair and replace old power engines,

according to acting CUC executive director Betty G. Terlaje yesterday.

In response to a question by Sen. Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian) during

See **TERLAJE** on Page 4

Info sought on alleged \$200M ARPA funds in trust account

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) on Monday requested Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita for information on \$200-million American Rescue Plan Act funds that the previous admin-

istration allegedly deposited in a trust account.

DeLeon Guerrero also requested Bank of Guam official Amoretta Carlson to provide her with all information relating to the trust account at BOG that was opened by the previous administration with former Finance secretary



DeLeon Guerrero

David DLG. Atalig.

In her Open Government Act request to Norita, DeLeon Guerrero said that Norita herself had shared in a meeting last

See **ARPA** on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
The Bank of Guam branch in Garapan.



INSIDE



NATION

Republican Donald Trump is positioning the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack and its failed attempt to overturn the 2020 election as a cornerstone of his bid to return to the White House.

PAGE 10



WORLD

Russian President Vladimir Putin said after extending his rule in an election that stifled opposition that Moscow will not relent in its invasion of Ukraine and plans to create a buffer zone to help protect against long-range Ukrainian strikes and cross-border raids.

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LIFE & STYLE

A new Banksy mural drew crowds to a London street on Monday, even before the elusive graffiti artist confirmed that the work was his.

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Local



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Rotary Club of Saipan vice president Charles Cepeda and president Irene Holl take a photo with guest speaker Kimberlyn King-Hinds, right, shortly after King-Hinds' presentation yesterday at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan.

King-Hinds speaks of women's capabilities

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

Former Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds joined the Rotary Club of Saipan yesterday at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in their recognition of women during Women's Month and to share some of her personal experiences.

As the club's main guest

speaker, King-Hinds highlighted not only her experience in opposing the Commonwealth Joint Military Training proposal of the U.S. Department of Defense to expand military trainings in the CNMI, but also about the other women whose advocacy help start a movement.

"Before I even came on to the scene, at the forefront of the movement were various community organizations led by women who had different views about the expanding footprint of militarization in the CNMI," she said.

King-Hinds cited Pagan-Watch led by the late Cynthia Kaipat; the Guardians of Gani led by Rosemund Santos; Keli Tenorio and Genevieve Cabrera, who were advocates for the preservation of Pagan; and the Tinian Women's Association led by Deborah Fleming and Florine and Juanita Mendiola, who were advocating against harmful military training activities on Tinian.

"These women were fired up and ready for battle. They were at festivals and public spaces educating the community about these [military] plans. They got on the radio and were keeping the public informed. They hit the streets and circulated petitions. They were not only making noise, but they were also organizing the community to show up and speak out against these plans," she said.

At first, she said, these

women were dismissed as just another activist group that's against the U.S. military.

"Military training activities is normal for the people of the CNMI and, because so many of our children are enlisted, there was hesitancy to reject the plans outright publicly. Then and now, we also still have a generation of people who outright fear opposing the federal government and so they encountered resistance and were labeled as 'activists'" that weren't aligned with what was best for the CNMI, especially when they formed an alliance called Alternative Zero who stood in solidarity in opposing any additional military training.

"But they persisted and they rallied our community and the CNMI government to publicly fight against the proposed plans," she added.

King-Hinds said she has never before seen the CNMI community come out in masses to any public hearing. "But because they hit the pavement, knocked on doors, stood by roadsides, and called on our leaders to take action, they empowered our community to take action. After the initial [Environmental Impact Statement] was rolled out for public input, there were over 27,000 comments that were submitted, which is actually unheard of and speaks volumes of the aggressive grassroots campaign that these

See WOMEN on Page 4

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Muna's rubber ducky rules the roost in PIC's Duck Race

By **CHRYSTAL MARINO**
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Maria Muna's duck beat out over 2,000 rubber duckies last Saturday to win first place in the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's 2024 Duck Race in San Antonio, winning for Muña the grand prize of \$2,024.

Gerald Aniciete's rubber critter slid in for second place and the \$500 prize, while Elena Rose Galagaran's superhero duck swam in for third place and winning the \$200 prize, followed by Nami T's unicorn duck in fourth place and the \$50 prize.

Hundreds gathered along the entire length of the PIC Lazy River, which circum-

navigates the resort, to watch over 2,000 rubber duckies take a much-anticipated swim against cancer.

As per tradition, the two-man relay race saw last year's winner, Taiyo Akimaru, return to reclaim the title, this time with teammate Michael Miller, winning for both young men a five-month PIC Explorer membership card. Kean Pajarillaga and Kouki Wanabe came in second place, taking home two five-month PIC Waterpark memberships.

The duck race not only brought family fun and smiles, but it was all for a good cause, as the proceeds will be turned over to the fundraiser's recipient, the Commonwealth Cancer Association.



Taiyo Akimaru and Michael Miller, center, pose for a photo after winning the two-man swim relay race at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio last Friday.

According to PIC, this year's 2,442 duck sales beat out last year's 2,116.

During the event, E-Land Group CEO Brian Shin

thanked all community members who joined, and a special thanks to the CCA, for letting them once again take part in the fight against cancer.



The 2024 Duck Race's winning ducks are shown, as well as the duck trophy for the two-man swim relay race that took place at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio last Friday.



CHRYSTAL MARINO

A crowd eagerly follows the flow of their ducks involved in the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's 2024 Duck Race last Friday at the San Antonio resort.

Lynn Tenorio, CCA interim executive director, also expressed her gratitude. "This has been amazing. It's just so exciting for CCA to be a recipient again for the second year. We were recipients last year as well, and so, being a non-profit, we really can't do anything without the support of our corporate sponsors and our corporate partners and the community," she said. "This is such a fun event. I mean, you can see how exciting it is, and it's just so beautiful. ...They did it right around sunset, and you have all these ducks in here, and it's a fun family event. It's just a lot of fun. How can you not smile if you see ducks, right?"

She said the funds they will receive will go toward client services.

Janet Aniciete, who along with her husband won second place in the duck race, said they joined the race because her daughter loves ducks. Aniciete added that, along with seeing her children enjoy, and win, they were especially happy to give back to the community while having fun. "We are happy that we're able to support the Commonwealth Cancer Association. At least we can give a little back to the community by helping out like this," she said.



Located at the Armatech Building in Chalan Kanoa across the intersection leading to the U.S. Post Office. For reservations or for more information, call 234-8894, 287-8895 and 498-8899.



CHRYSTAL MARINO

Pacific Islands Club Saipan's Dennis Tababa, center, holds up the first two winning ducks during Pacific Islands Club Saipan's 2024 Duck Race last Friday in San Antonio.



CHRYSTAL MARINO

The crowd waits in anticipation for the winning duck at the finish line during the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's 2024 Duck Race last Friday in San Antonio.

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Tribune accuses Nonstop of breach of contract

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Tribune has filed a breach of contract lawsuit against Nonstop Corp., the same company whose owners currently face possible prosecution on contempt charges for failing to respond to questions in the ongoing investigation into the former administration’s grant program.

Saipan Tribune filed the lawsuit against Nonstop Corp. in Superior Court, alleging that the corporation failed to pay for over \$36,000 worth of advertisements.

“Beginning on or about Aug. 17, 2022, the parties entered into a contract for the publication of advertisements in the *Saipan Tribune* relating to the Building Optimism, Opportunities and Stability Together program. *Saipan Tribune* fully performed its obligations under this contract. Defendant has breached this contract by failing to pay for these services. As a result... *Saipan Tribune* has sustained damages,” the lawsuit states.

Saipan Tribune is asking the court to grant it damages in the principal amount of \$36,120,

plus pre-judgement interest, attorney fees, and other relief the court deems proper.

According to the *Saipan Tribune* complaint, on or about Aug. 15, 2022, Nonstop Corp. co-owner Robert Travilla contacted *Saipan Tribune* requesting for information regarding the publication of an advertisement relating to the BOOST program. Nonstop Corp. agreed to proceed with the advertisement after both parties discussed the terms and conditions of this advertisement.

On Aug. 17, 2022, *Saipan Tribune* issued an advertising

order to Nonstop Corp., confirming the initial publication of the BOOST advertisement.

At the request of the defendant, *Saipan Tribune* published BOOST-related advertisements between on or about Aug. 17, 2022, and Dec. 16, 2022.

On Oct. 14, 2022, Nonstop Corp., through owners Salina Sapp and Travilla, executed a credit application that was submitted to *Saipan Tribune*.

“Pursuant to the terms and conditions of this application, defendant expressly agreed to pay interest, court costs, and reasonable attorney fees in the

event that defendant failed to pay for the advertising publication,” said the complaint.

Saipan Tribune claims it has repeatedly attempted to collect payment from the defendant for the advertisements.

“Notwithstanding these demands, defendant has failed to remit payments to *Saipan Tribune*. Defendant owes *Saipan Tribune* the principal amount of \$36,120 together with pre-judgment interest, reasonable attorney fees and court costs,” said the complaint.

ERRATUM

Saipan Tribune mistakenly used a photo of Saipan Renal Care in the online article “Healthcare provider wants lawsuit dismissed” that was published last March 19. The photo has been replaced. We apologize for the error.

TERLAJE

From page 1

a Senate committee meeting, Terlaje said they have to make a lot of sacrifices to keep afloat and that payments of their other customers are the ones keeping CUC afloat.

“We’re not reinvesting back into the utility. ...We have a power plant that’s significantly outdated and... in trouble. ...[It] needs major overhauls that we can’t afford,” Terlaje said.

Citing another example, Terlaje said that CUC just submitted its annual budget, which does not contain capital outlays or capital expenditures.

“[The budget] should have improvements and that’s something that we’ve sacrificed because of the fact that we’re not getting the funding coming in,” she said.

The Special Committee on the CNMI Government’s Unpaid CUC Bills was created to investigate the government’s unpaid utility bills.

At the meeting held in the Senate chamber yesterday, Sen. Dennis James C. Mendiola (R-Rota), who is the vice chair of the special committee, clarified that the special investigative body is not intended to blame anyone. Rather, their goal is to try and get to the bot-

tom of the arrears and try to prevent this from happening in the future, he added.

Mendiola said they called in Terlaje and her team in order to gain an understanding of how the billing process works.

“So I just wanted to make sure that we put that out there and that it’s more of just trying to get to the bottom of this and allow the [Senate] president to have a course of action here,” Mendiola said.

Sen. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan), who chairs the special committee, reiterated this point, saying the purpose of this investigation is to get a clear understanding of government accounts that are in arrears and validate them to make sure that whatever CUC is claiming to be due to them is also agreed upon by the respective government entities.

“It’s a two-way street,” Magofna pointed out.

She said they want to help reconcile the accounts, even though she is sure that that’s something CUC and the government are already working on.

Magofna said they are doing this oversight at the request of Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) and they have 60 days to gather as much information as they can about these accounts and try to come to a resolution and make recommendations for

the future so that they prevent these types of financial issues from arising continually.

After the end of the meeting, Magofna said she is glad to hear that CUC and the administration are taking steps to install prepaid meters in all government facilities. She said that would greatly help reduce or even prevent these arrears from occurring in the future.

“That’s a step in the right direction,” Magofna said.

She said they expect CUC to furnish them with some documents for further review and discussion with the committee members.

At the start of the meeting, Terlaje said this is not a new issue for CUC as it’s been going on every time there’s a struggle with the government’s revenues.

Terlaje said CUC is usually put on the backburner. In this case, the central government itself has payables in the amount of \$13 million that are due to CUC.

With the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.’s utility arrears, Terlaje said the total is about \$60 million, including a good amount of penalties, at this time.

Terlaje said they currently have an agreement with the CNMI government as they met last month when they were in the U.S. District Court for the NMI. She said they had

a closed-door negotiation and that meeting included the U.S. Department of Justice attorney and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency attorney, along with the CUC management and counsel, and Gov. Arnold I. Palacios.

Terlaje disclosed that they all agreed that there needs to be a reconciliation on the central government side and its \$13-million arrears.

She said Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita is struggling in getting her department secretaries to upload their billings to the system so she (Norita) does not see these billings in their system. Terlaje said they told Norita that that’s an internal issue on the government side and it needs to be resolved quickly because, as far as CUC is concerned, these bills remain outstanding.

She said the bills keep increasing as long as there’s no effort on the Finance’s part to do their own reconciliation and work with CUC on paying it off.

Terlaje said they agreed that, by April 1, 2024, the central government is supposed to make a 25% payment on the balance that was on the books as of 2021, which was \$1.7 million.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

ARPA

From page 1

Jan. 11, 2023, that the previous administration had opened and deposited \$200 million of ARPA funds in a trust account at the BOG.

With the current financial condition of the government, she said, it is important to know that funds are available.

She asked Norita for information pertaining to trust ac-

count that the current administration had closed on Jan. 11, 2023, or earlier.

DeLeon Guerrero also asked Norita for a copy of the ARPA spending plan, and any changes to it that had been approved by the U.S. Treasury.

In her Freedom of Information Act request to Carlson, DeLeon Guerrero asked for the same information relating to the trust account, plus any other related information about it.

MANGLONA

From page 1

seeking re-election and that there are some steps within the NMI Republican Party that he needs to finalize.

“It’s just a formality, but I want to respect the process,” King-Nabors said.

DeLeon Guerrero said she will also be running but has not firmed up a decision on which seat to run for.

“I plan to run as an independent. I still have much that I can provide my service to the CNMI people,” DeLeon Guerrero said.

This year’s CNMI election will be on Nov. 5.

WOMEN

From page 2

women launched to help educate the public.

“These comments also help crystalized some of the CNM’s position with regards to the proposed plans. And it was also through their efforts and outcry that the assistance of Earth Justice, a nonprofit public environmental law organization, was secured, to sue the Navy and the Department of Defense.”

She shared that those 27,000 comments from the public were the baseline for any policy discussion on the subject.

“I credit our community’s participation to the efforts of these women who persisted and fought to be heard,” she said.

Today, the CJMT plans are being revised and have drastically changed, King-Hinds said, and the CNMI had established very clear red lines: no bombing of Pagan and Tinian, no ripping out of any coral reef, no special use airspace that will impact international flights and interisland commute, and no to restricted access to historical and cultural sites that Tinian relies on for its local economy.

“All these line items are off

the table,” she said.

Also, the CNMI and DOD are taking a collaborative approach in the EIS revision, which is expected to be completed sometime later this year.

“In other words, instead of DOD dumping thousands of pages of documents to review, they are sharing the chapters of the revised EIS as they are completed. This is not required by NEPA [National Environment Protection Act] but an ask that we’ve made to ensure that the people of the CNMI through our local regulatory agencies have ample time to review the potential impact of the revised plans,” she said.

At the beginning of the fight against DOD, King-Hinds said there were many who told them to give up, likening the fight to one against Goliath. But because of so many women who spearheaded the fight against the U.S. military’s plans, a completed Revised CJMT EIS will be published in the coming months.

“In other words, we beat Goliath with many thanks to the women who led the charge at the community level,” she added.

King-Hinds will be running for the position of CNMI delegate to the U.S. Congress this November.

TORRES

From page 1

It was learned from Torres this week that the Internal Affairs investigation he had initiated to look into how inmate Joey Maratita managed to escape is now finished and that he had proposed to DOC’s Internal Affairs to have the two correction officers suspended without pay.

“After a thorough Internal Affairs investigation was conducted, I proposed to suspend the two officers involved without pay. I want the community to know that their safety and

security is a top priority and that DOC is committed to working diligently to ensure similar events like this don’t occur,” he said.

Torres also shared some updates on what has been done following the escape.

“I called for an After-Action Review, which was conducted a few days after the incident with all partners involved to include the Department of Public Safety, NMI Judiciary, Customs, and U.S. Marshals Service. It was a productive meeting where we all shared important information and processed the incident,” he said.

Torres also noted that DOC has since identified weaknesses within the department and has made recommendations for improvement, which includes updates to security protocols, additional training for staff, and procedural changes.

“As a Department of Corrections, we all came together to review and analyze the sequence of events leading up to the incident and the immediate actions taken to address it. We identified weaknesses and made recommendations for improvement, which included updates to security protocols, additional training for staff

and procedural changes. We have implemented revised procedures to protocols while on escort trips and enhanced training and preparedness for all staff, to include a mandatory Annual Refresher Training. We will also establish a system for ongoing monitoring and feedback to assess the effectiveness of the implemented changes,” he said.

Maratita managed to elude his two DOC escorts while he was being treated at the Commonwealth Health Center last Jan. 24. He was apprehended by DOC officers late that same evening near the old Japanese jail in Garapan.

Manta Ray Battalion cleans up PakPak Beach

Saipan Southern High School's Manta Ray Battalion JROTC cadets cleaned up Pak Pak Beach last Saturday as part of their community service requirement.

The cleanup was held from 8am to 9:30am and the cadets were led by senior army instructor, CSM (Ret.) Richard Basa.

Before the cleanup started, the cadets were given their safety briefing and issued gloves, trash bags, and road guard vests. The battalion's cadets were then split into two groups. The first group, consisting of HQ and Alpha companies, started on the south side of the beach, and second group, consisting of Bravo, Charlie companies, and staff members, started on the north side of the beach.

C/PVT Denilyn Jacoba said, "I thought of the beach cleanup as a great experience to clean up our community. It's an experience for the future because it helps our environment and teaches us how to come and work together."

"The cleanup last Saturday was good. It was a good experience that I was allowed to participate in, and it's great to see that the younger generations are beautifying the community," said C/CPL Faith Sablan.

C/CPT Jaron Lifofoi said, "The beach cleanup was a great experience, especially since it is one of the last community service events I will do before I end my JROTC journey as a senior cadet. It was an amazing way to contribute to my community with the program that taught me so many things throughout high school."

The cadet leaders monitored and tracked the different types of trash during the cleanup. Plastics and cigarette butts made up the majority of the litter, resulting in filling up approximately nine trash bags. After cleaning the two beach areas, the cadets gathered all the trash bags that needed disposal. The Manta Ray cadets are proud to be able to participate in cleanup events that help beautify our beaches and conserve our environment. They would like to thank all the cadets who showed up bright and early to help make this cleanup a success. (PR)

CNMI DOL to transition to new Census of Employment Form

By the first quarter of calendar year 2024 and forward, the Department of Labor will no longer be accepting outdated versions of the Census of Employment (a.k.a. Total Workforce Listing) form.

All submissions for the first quarter must be in the new format.


For the latest version, visit labor.cnmi.gov. Click on "Resources," "Forms and Publications," then "Census of Employment (Total Workforce Listing)" to obtain a copy.

Outdated forms submitted to the department will be returned to the employer with a request to perform corrective actions. This is to ensure that reporting practices and procedures are aligned with Labor rules, policies, and regulations.

As a reminder, employers must take note of the following filing deadlines:

- 1st quarter (January, February, and March) due April 30
- 2nd quarter (April, May, and June) due July 31
- 3rd quarter (July, August, and September) due Oct. 31
- 4th quarter (October, November, and December) due Jan. 31

For any questions regarding this notice, contact (670) 322-9935. (PR)



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AMENDED JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 04-2024
Opening date: March 04, 2024 Closing date: March 22, 2024

Location: SAIPAN

Position(s): (2) AOA Controller-I
(1) ARFF Mechanic II
(1) Comptroller
(1) Custodial
(1) Master Electrician
(1) Procurement Technician
(1) Receptionist/Secretary
(1) Safety Officer/Quality Control Specialist

Location: TINIAN

Position(s): (1) General Maintenance

Location: ROTA

Position(s): (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance-I
(2) Custodial/Maintenance-I

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PL 9/1 to 9/12 (\$10.73/hr to \$18.35/hr)
PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
Minimum: \$36,356.89/annum
Maximum: \$62,182.63/annum

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PL 2/1 to 2/12 (\$7.63/hr to \$13.04/hr)


SALARY
PL 5/1 to 5/12 (\$8.83/hr to \$15.10/hr)
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Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays and austerity, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

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Executive Director



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- In Job Training for a minimum of 10 hours per week, OR
- Attending an education program on a full-time basis
- Have a gross monthly income that does not exceed Federal Poverty Income Guideline for a family of the same size.

CHILD'S ELIGIBILITY:

- Child must reside with the parent who is in a CCDF approved activity (work, school or training).
- Be under the age of 13/children under 18 y/o with Special Needs may qualify (Must provide supporting documents)
- Must be a US citizen
- Must be residing in the CNMI

For more information regarding eligibility requirements, please contact CCDF Eligibility Workers at:

- For Saipan, please contact 670-664-2589/95/75/76
- For Tinian, please contact 670-433-2233
- For Rota, please contact 670-532-3222

You may also visit childcare.gov.mp for more information or to download the CCDF Subsidy Waitlist Application Packet.


Are you in full time work, school or training?

Do you need someone to care for your children while you are in work, school or training?

Do you want a family member, friend or a daycare provider to care for your children?


You may qualify for Quality Child Care services!

DCCA-CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT FUND PROGRAM
Bldg. #1347,Capitol Hill, Saipan
664-2575/76/89/95
childcare.gov.mp



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program
Caller Box 10007 Bldg. No. 1347/1344 Ascension Drive
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Website: www.childcare.gov.mp

Vision for Children and Families:
"All children in the CNMI will be safe, healthy, and thriving members of our culturally diverse community. Their families will have access to the high quality supports they need to achieve their potential."



Effective February 1, 2024, to September 30, 2026

Eligibility Guidelines	
Family Size	Income Level
1	3,508.00
2	4,587.00
3	5,667.00
4	6,746.00
5	7,825.00
6	8,905.00
7	9,108.00
8	9,306.00
9	9,512.00

Sliding Fee Scale/Monthly Co-payments

Family Income	Family Size 1	Family Size 2	Family Size 3	Family Size 4	Family Size 5	Family Size 6 Max limit \$120.00	Family Size 7 Max limit \$120.00	Family Size 8 Max limit \$120.00	Family Size 9 Max limit \$120.00
\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
\$1 to \$1500	waived	waived	waived	waived	waived	waived	waived	waived	waived
\$1501 to \$2500	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$70.00	\$80.00	\$90.00
\$2501 to \$3000	\$20.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$70.00	\$80.00	\$90.00	\$100.00
\$3001 to \$3508	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$70.00	\$80.00	\$90.00	\$100.00	\$110.00
\$3509 to \$4587		\$50.00	\$60.00	\$70.00	\$80.00	\$90.00	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$120.00
\$4588 to \$5667			\$70.00	\$80.00	\$90.00	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$120.00	\$120.00
\$5668 to \$6746				\$90.00	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$120.00	\$120.00	\$120.00
\$6747 to \$7825					\$110.00	\$120.00	\$120.00	\$120.00	\$120.00
\$7826 to \$8905						\$120.00	\$120.00	\$120.00	\$120.00
\$8906 to \$9108							\$120.00	\$120.00	\$120.00
\$9109 to \$9306								\$120.00	\$120.00
\$9307 to \$9512									\$120.00

Note: For families with 5 or more children, the maximum co-payment limit will be at \$120.00 monthly.
*This will apply to family size of 6 in a 2-parent household.

FOR CCDF PROGRAM USE ONLY

Source/s of Income	Eligibility Disposition:
Salary and Wages:	Family Size:
Pension:	Eligibility Level:
Unemployment:	Monthly Gross Income:
Workmen's Comp:	Income Larger than Eligibility Scale:
Rental Income:	Income below eligibility scale:
Alimony:	Co-payment:
Military Allotment:	
Child Support:	Eligibility completed by/date:
Food Stamp:	Comments:
WIC:	
Others:	Recommended for: <input type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Disapproval
Comments:	Notes:
Check dates: _____ to _____	Eligibility Specialist Initials: _____

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Chuck vs. Bibi: Schumer's gambit against Netanyahu

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer—whom we knew back when he was Brooklyn Assemblyman Chuck Schumer and Congressman Chuck Schumer—wants Israel to hold new elections, and makes no secret that he thinks and hopes when they do, Bibi Netanyahu will be turned out. So he conveyed in a Thursday speech on the Senate floor that surprised and rankled many fellow Democrats.

A senator expressing his beliefs does not amount to the U.S. government interfering in a foreign election, as some spuriously claim. Schumer may be the most powerful Democrat in the legislative branch, not to mention the most prominent Jew in American politics at the moment, but he doesn't set executive branch policy. It's President Biden who does. And though Biden has made his disappointment with Netanyahu clear enough, the White House distanced itself from Schumer's remarks related to replacing Netanyahu.

Senators are free to back or to criticize Israel's every move, to say that they want foreign aid to flow or to be interrupted. Though the practice is best avoided, even presidents are free to do that; what qualifies as interference is if and when the U.S. government itself actively participates in a free and democratic overseas election (unlike the sham happening in Russia) either openly or sub rosa, putting powerful American thumbs on the scales.

Schumer's point is simply that he wants the Israeli people to have a chance to weigh in on their current leadership and choose another pathway if that's the popular will as registered in a free and fair trip to the ballot box.

We agree.

Netanyahu has been right to hit back against Hamas, which orchestrated the horrific Oct. 7 pogrom of murder, rape and kidnapping.

But, as Israelis know well, his government—which purports to put security first—failed to protect the nation from an assault that they should've known was coming. As the war has ramped up, Netanyahu has shown insufficient care to avoid Palestinian civilian casualties, or for stemming a slow-motion humanitarian crisis. He's hardened his opposition to a two-state solution, which remains the only sane long-term answer to the problems plaguing the region.

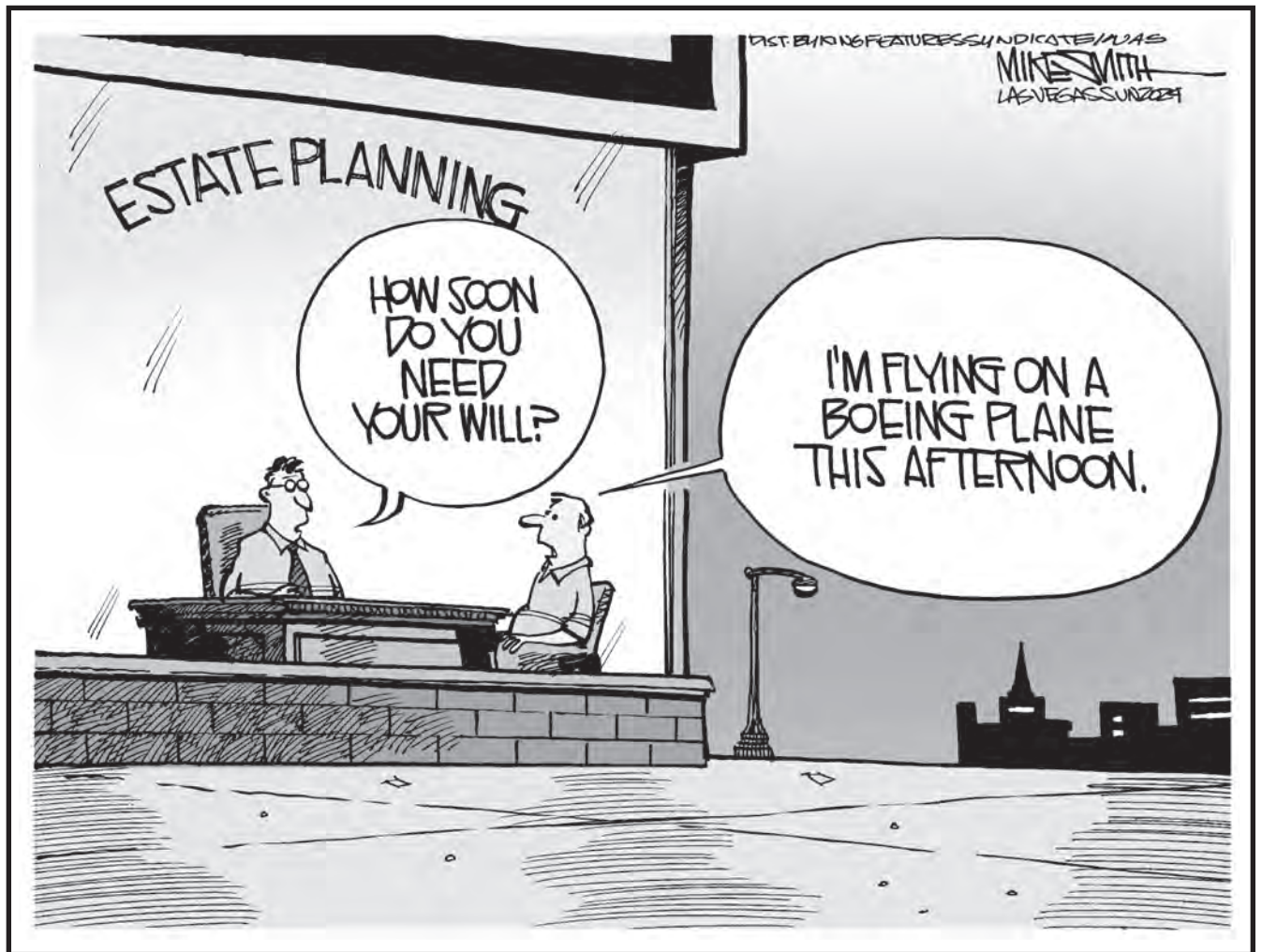
He's shown fierce determination to dismantle Hamas which we appreciate, but a tragic lack of vision and discipline to lay out a credible plan for how to put Gaza's pieces back together.

None of this touches on Netanyahu's brazen attempts to disempower Israel's independent judiciary or the corruption charges he's up against in court, both of which have fueled powerful popular resistance on the streets in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Schumer said, "Nobody expects Prime Minister Netanyahu to do the things that must be done to break the cycle of violence, preserve Israel's credibility on the world stage, and work toward a two-state solution."

Those who love Israel and want it to thrive long past this moment of crisis should second those emotions. The only serious question that remains is whether, by making it appear as though the party in power in the United States wants Netanyahu out,

See **CHUCK** on Page 7



Through America's Looking Glass

It probably hasn't dawned on you yet. But it will. Because what happened to Alice is happening to us all.

Our news screens have become our Looking-Glasses. And we are being sucked in by our own news screens. Just as Alice climbed onto her mantle and stepped into the world inside her own Looking-Glass. (That is, her mirror, in "Through the Looking Glass," Lewis Carroll's 1871 sequel to "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.")

No wonder our news seems so nonsensical, non-decipherable and backward. That's how it seemed to Alice when she was inside her own mirror. Time happened in reverse and people rhymed in Jabberwocky.

And that's the way our world looks and sounds today, as we see and hear it from inside America's Looking Glass.

Look at what has gone so wrong and seems so backward in the Republican Party founded by Abe and forged by Ike (who saved Europe from being conquered by Hitler) and Ron (who gloriously praised the Greatest Generation that made the world safe for democracy).

But we've just seen and heard the new standard bearer-apparent of the Republican Party—Donald Trump—lavishing praise on Europe's only democracy-snuffing, free-speech-stifling, dictatorial autocrat: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. And we've heard all about his love of all sorts of dictators—and even praise of Adolf Hitler.

In his opulent Mar-a-Lago, Trump, speaking in his own dialectical Jabberwocky, declared: "There's nobody that's better, smarter or a better leader than Viktor Orbán ... He's the boss and he's a great leader, fantastic leader. In Europe and around the world, they respect him." (No they don't.)

Inside our news screen/Looking Glass, we see Trump repeatedly bragging he could end the Russia-Ukraine war in 24 hours. Now Orban helped Trump make more news by explaining the not-so-secret how of what he called Trump's "quite detailed plans."

Detail No. 1: No money for Ukraine. Detail No. 2: Let Putin's invaders win—the first conquest of a European nation since Hitler.

Orban told Moscow's TV1: "He says the following: First, he will not give a single penny for the Russo-Ukrainian war. That's why the war will end, because it's obvious that Ukraine cannot stand on its own two feet ... The Europeans won't be able to fund this war alone. And then the war will end."

But, inside America's Looking Glass, we are belatedly seeing and hearing even worse from the generals, policy makers and insiders who served America's 45th president.

CNN's national security expert and anchor Jim Sciutto has just come out with a book that's chock-full of abhorrent revelations

By **MARTIN SCHRAM**

Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.



about Trump. Former Marine Gen. John Kelly, who was Trump's White House chief of staff, told Sciutto that Trump "likes dictators so much....He was shocked that he didn't have dictatorial type powers to send US forces places or to move money around within the budget. And he looked at (Vladimir) Putin and Xi (Jinping) and that nutcase in North Korea (Kim Jong Un) as people who were like him in terms of being a tough guy."

Trump's former national security adviser John Bolton also wrote in his book, "The Room Where It Happened," that Trump supported Xi's incarceration of more than 1 million Muslim Uighurs: "Xi had explained to Trump why he was basically building concentration camps in Xinjiang. According to our interpreter, Trump said that Xi should go ahead with building the camps, which Trump thought was exactly the right thing to do."

Kelly said Trump repeatedly admired things about Hitler. He said Hitler "rebuilt the economy." Also that Trump admired what he perceived as the "loyalty" Hitler received from his generals and top staff. Kelly told Sciutto: "...when I pointed out to him the German generals as a group were not loyal to him (Hitler) and in fact tried to assassinate him a few times, he didn't know that."

These are patriotic Americans who witnessed Trump say and do things they considered abhorrent while president. But they kept the worst to themselves. Some kept it until they could sell it to us in books. But at least we finally know.

And so do Mitch McConnell, Lindsey Graham and all the many wise old birds of what has sadly become a Grim Old Party. They know America and the world would be safer if they had voted to convict Trump when he was impeached—so he would be constitutionally barred from ever again being president.

But no. Today they are even endorsing for president a standard bearer of the party of Abe, Ike and Ron who loves and admires present and past dictators—and even Adolf Hitler.

That thumpity-thump you hear is Ike and Reagan spinning. And the huge marbled Abe, immobile in his monument chair, sits silently weeping for his party that has lost its soul.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

The difference between a Trump victory and a Biden victory

It's impossible to predict with confidence who will win the presidency of the United States in November 2024. President Joe Biden seems likely to win the popular vote. He received 7 million more votes than Donald Trump in 2020, and the fundamental partisan lines that separate our nation seem unlikely to shift significantly in 2024.

But maybe they will. Some polls show Trump leading Biden. In any case, we don't decide our elections by popular vote. Out of millions of votes, a few thousand in critical states could determine the outcome in the Electoral College.

In short, the election is a toss-up, which calls for a realistic look at what will happen if each man wins.

If Trump wins: Trump's policy positions are often vague. It's not always clear where he stands on abortion, for example, and he recently suggested—maybe inadvertently—that he would be open to cuts in Social Security and Medicare. In fact, in 2020 the Republican Party's reluctance to commit to detailed policies was expressed by its failure to publish a platform.

Policy ambiguity creates a vacuum that could be filled by "Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise," an 887-page document produced by The Heritage Foundation. The "Mandate" hasn't been endorsed by Trump as yet, but it represents a detailed blueprint for a remake of the federal government that would appeal to Trump.

The "Mandate" calls for lower corporate taxes, further restraints on abortion rights and rejection of measures to limit climate change. Most important, it transfers power away from the so-called administrative state in the direction of the White House.

In short, if you want a sense of what might happen if Trump is elected, the "Mandate" wouldn't be a bad place to start.

What else would a Trump victory entail? It could mean

the end of NATO, but certainly the end of Ukraine. A second Trump administration would probably be friendlier to authoritarians: Hungary's president, Viktor Orban, recently enjoyed a congenial visit to Mar-a-Lago.

At the least a Trump victory would make history: For the first time our nation will have elected a man who still denies the results of the last election.

If Biden wins: A Biden victory is less complicated and less earthshaking. Depending on the makeup of the House and Senate, we might expect a realignment toward the left, including efforts to restore reproductive rights and reinforcement of the social safety net. Efforts will probably be made to save Ukraine and to reconfirm our support for NATO.

Above all, a Biden victory would be a recommitment to the classic narrative of normal American politics, the tug-of-war between "big" government and "small" government.

You might have the impression that I prefer a Biden victory. But that's irrelevant; everything here is either verifiable fact or a plausible, defensible conjecture. Here's another plausible conjecture:

The most important difference between a Trump victory and a Biden victory is that if Trump wins, Biden will hand over power peacefully, just as President Barack Obama did in 2017; if Biden wins, Trump will reject the result.

In fact, a peaceful acceptance of a Biden victory by Trump and his millions of committed, well-armed followers is impos-

By JOHN M. CRISP
Tribune News Service

John M. Crisp, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service, lives in Texas and can be reached at jcrispcolumns@gmail.com.



sible to imagine. We have every reason to believe that they will resort to violence to overturn the election. That's what Jan. 6 was all about. And a recent American Enterprise Institute poll indicates that 39% of Republicans believe that political violence is sometimes necessary and justified.

In short, it's naive to believe that the Trump era will end without bloodshed, and it's fatal to fail to prepare for it. The question will be whether a new Biden administration and the millions who support it are prepared to commit the violence that will be required to suppress a second attempt at insurrection.

Too dramatic? Don't take my word for it. Last Saturday in Ohio, Trump said that if he is not elected, "It's going to be a blood bath for the country." He should be taken seriously and literally.

Vernal equinox: The arrival of spring

LITERARY NOOK
By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka "Pepe Batbon" Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. Joey is the Poet Laureate of Tinian, celebrating 40 years in the CNMI.



Frühlingsstimmen: Spring Voices
(A waltz composed by Johann Strauss II, 1882)

The lark rises into blue heights
the warm wind blows softly;
its blissful mild breath revives
and kisses the fields and meadows.
Spring awakens in beauteous splendor,
let all suffering now end,
all grief has flown far away!
Sorrow grows fainter as joyful sights
and a belief in happiness return.
Sunlight, now break through!
Everything laughs, everything awakens!"

Music Insouciance In Situ

Music in Spring life starts to swing
Music in your ear brains shift a gear
Music in words in 4ths 5ths and 3rds
Music in sentences in choral cadences
Music in your mind time to unwind
Music in your head more to be said
Musical forms in Baroque norms
Musical widths in jazz bars and 5ths
Music in your feet waltzing is sweet
Music in your arms with all its charms
Music in your hands clap with bands
Musical movie all dancing groovy
Music from the past determined to last
Music comes soon from sunrise to moon.

American business needs a strong democracy, not political retribution

By DANIELLA BALLOU-AARES, JOHN PLEASANTS, and PETER BRACK
THE FULCRUM

The United States continues to have one of the freest and most dynamic economies in the world. U.S. businesses generate jobs, improve living standards and are among the most trusted institutions in American life. They thrive in no small part from operating in our enviable democratic republic and free market economy. But in recent years political leaders have displayed growing and worrisome authoritarian tendencies that undermine these cherished advantages and threaten the American economy. Case in point: political retribution toward businesses in response to acts of free speech and the abrogation of their first amendment rights.

There is a huge difference between elected public officials demanding alterations to business practices by enacting laws affecting entire sectors—the proper scope of governance—and using the law or bully pulpits to wage targeted campaigns against individual business leaders that do not share the leaders' policy views. Indeed, a hallmark of totalitarianism is the total politicization of society, where the awarding of contracts and the ability to freely operate a business are entirely bound up with whether business leaders express fealty to the ideological beliefs of powerful officials.

We have seen a growing number of examples of this over the past decade and at every level of government, from municipal agencies to the White House. Most prominent is the ongoing fight between Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Disney, in which the company's decision to express an opinion that differed from the governor and local political leaders led to a protracted and cascading series of legal battles and attempts to punish and disrupt the company's Florida operations.

This type of targeted political retribution should not be condoned by any party or elected official. And yet leaders from both sides of the political spectrum have entered retributive waters, although with notable partisan asymmetry. In 2019, President Donald Trump sought reexamination of the government's cloud-computing contract with Amazon in retaliation for coverage he did not like from what he called "the Amazon Washington Post," ultimately leading to the company losing the \$10 billion arrangement. He sought to block AT&T's purchase of Time Warner in retaliation for CNN's coverage; courts ultimately allowed the merger. And recently, in his role as a leader of the GOP and its frontrunner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, he promised in victory to have Comcast and NBC "investigated" for their coverage, made it a personal vendetta to go after companies that do not align with his political agenda and pledged to undertake an overall campaign of "retribution."

At the state level, after Delta Airlines in 2018 announced it would withdraw discounts for National Rifle Association mem-

bers in the wake of the Parkland, Florida, school shooting—a move that ultimately affected 13 accounts—Georgia Republican lawmakers retaliated by revoking a \$50 million tax exemption for the airline. On the other side of the aisle, Chick-fil-A's history of donating to religious groups opposed to same-sex marriage led local Democratic officials to oppose the company's expansion in several cities in 2021 and to unsuccessfully seek to cancel an existing contract with the company to open on New York thruways.

We as individuals certainly have our own opinions on which policies are worth company involvement and which side we would support. But that isn't the point. The point is that companies should be free to make whatever decisions they want about expressing an opinion on policy issues, within the bounds of law and regulation, and then answer to the market for the consequences. They shouldn't have to fear engagement will lead to government retribution from politicians looking to score points with their bases.

It is worth repeating that this behavior by government actors towards businesses is not normal. This is a rising and increasingly disturbing phenomenon in America, one that conflicts with our values as a free society and harms our economic vitality. Regrettably, such retaliation has caused some business leaders to pull back from broader stakeholder and civic positions and to self-censor in hopes of avoiding political skirmishes and potential avengement.

We propose that the appropriate response to such targeted political retaliation is for business leaders and participants to defend democracy actively and stand united for all of the constitutional rights and protections that fuel our economic prosperity.






Asking which candidates support foundational democratic rights should not be a partisan question — it's a pro-America, pro-business responsibility. It's an important time for business leaders to stand strong as guardrails of democracy, and to take action to preserve the core system that lets so many flourish.

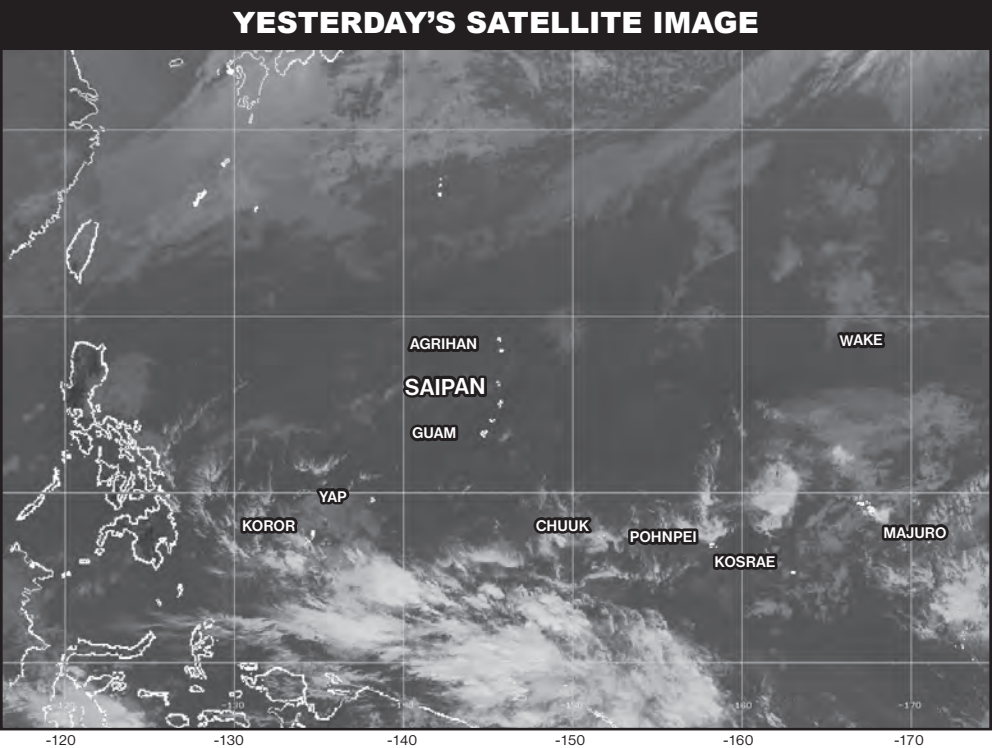
Ballous-Aares is CEO and founder of Leadership Now Project, a membership organization of business leaders committed to protecting American democracy. Pleasants is an internet executive who has led multiple global enterprises. Brack is a managing partner at Hypothesis, a venture capital firm, and a former Time Warner executive. Pleasants and Brack are founding members of the Leadership Now Project.

CHUCK
From page 6

the majority leader has just made it more likely that he'll remain in charge. The one thing that's dogged the world longer than the Israel-Palestinian conflict, it seems, is the law of unintended consequences.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.		Breezy starting Saturday. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.		Breezy. Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers.	
85	74°	85	74°	86	75°	86	75°	86	75°



MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 76°	
Palau	Light Rain Shower	86° / 79°	
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 79°	
Chuuk	Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Cloudy	88° / 77°	
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 79°	
Majuro	Cloudy	86° / 81°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Thursday	6:20 AM	6:28 PM
Friday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM
Saturday	6:18 AM	6:28 PM
Sunday	6:18 AM	6:28 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:03 AM	2:29 PM
Thursday	-	3:46 AM	3:21 PM
Friday	-	4:26 AM	4:10 PM
Saturday	-	5:02 AM	4:57 PM
Sunday	-	5:35 AM	5:43 PM

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2024

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily
SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily	UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
				UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily	UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam
				7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily	7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
				7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday
GUAM TO ROTA					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday
SAIPAN TO TINIAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN					
FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily



MVA

Commonwealth Ports Authority board chair Joe Ayuyu, center, and Marianas Visitors Authority board member Ivan Quichocho, second right, lead the Marianas delegation at the Routes Asia Show 2024 on Feb. 19-24, 2024, in Langkawi, Malaysia. Fifteen airlines held B2B meetings with the delegation to explore the feasibility of establishing new air services to the Marianas.

15 airlines meet with MVA, CPA to learn about Marianas

The Marianas Visitors Authority and Commonwealth Ports Authority recently met with 15 airlines at the aviation route development forum 2024 Routes Asia Show to discuss the potential of new air service to the Marianas.

Organized annually by Routes, a company that specializes in air service development, Routes Asia provides a platform for industry professionals to meet, network, and establish new routes. Attended by airlines, airports, tourism authorities, and other aviation-related organizations, this year's forum was held last month in Langkawi, Malaysia. Among the hundreds of attendees, many of whom stopped by the Marianas' information booth, the Marianas delegation was allotted time for in-depth B2B sessions with Star-

lux Airlines, Beijing Capital Airlines, Japan Airlines, China Southern Airlines, Hong Kong Airlines, Philippine Airlines, Hong Kong Express, Jetstar Group, China Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Qantas Airways Limited, Juneyao Air, Scoot, Virgin Australia Airlines, and AirAsia Group.

“Our primary objective at Routes Asia was to engage with airline officials in the Asia-Pacific region to explore opportunities for new air services, with the overall goal to increase airlift to the Marianas. Basically, to let them know who we are and what we have to offer as a destination and airport,” said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. “We were able to share information at our booth to many forum attendees,

and most importantly, drill down into specifics with 15 carriers about the many, many variables that must be considered to determine the feasibility of a new route to our destination.”

In addition to consumer demand and the bottom line of profitability, Concepcion noted that other variables airlines must consider are whether the Marianas lies within their route system, various national and international certifications, availability of aircraft equipment and crew, and airport facilities and costs. He said discussions continue with interested airlines, and any formal announcement of new routes would come from the airlines.

“What is crystal clear to both the MVA and CPA is that we operate in an extremely

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ., F-0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
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ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

TRIPLE CROWN LLC,) CIVIL ACTION
Plaintiff,) NO. 23-0371
-v-)
TLC ENTERTAINMENT,)
LLC AND TAKAYUKI)
NIIZEKI,)
Defendants.)

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO TAKAYUKI NIIZEKI, Defendant:
YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgement by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint. Dated February 22, 2024, by order of the Court.

/s/
Clerk of Court

Cong Nie, F0497
BANES HOREY BERMAN & MILLER, LLC
First Floor, Macararas Building
4165 Beach Road, Garapan
P.O. Box 501969
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-5684
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Email: dnies@pacificlawyers.law
Attorneys for Petitioner Theillia K. Arurang

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF) CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-0100-CV
THE ESTATE OF)
JOSEPH PETER)
SABLAN PALACIOS)
(DOB: 05/04/1969),)
Deceased,)
Date: April 4, 2024
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Judge: Hon. Joseph M. Camacho

TO: ALL HEIRS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES, AND CREDITORS OF JOSEPH PETER SABLAN PALACIOS, DECEASED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner Theillia K. Arurang has filed with the Clerk of this Court a Petition to Appoint Administratrix and for Letters of Administration in the above-captioned matter. The attorney of record representing Petitioner is Cong Nie of the Law Firm of Banes Horey Berman & Miller, LLC, P.O. Box 501969, Saipan, MP 96950.

The petition is set for hearing at 10:00 a.m./p.m. on Thursday, April 4, 2024 at the CNMI Superior Court, in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Any person who has any objection to the petition may file his or her objection with the Superior Court at any time before the hearing to present such objection or interest in the above captioned matter.

Creditors and all persons having claims against the Decedent or of his estate are hereby notified that they must file their claims with the Clerk of Court of the Superior Court within sixty (60) days of the first publication of this Notice, or the claims will be forever barred.

Dated this 12th day of March, 2024.

/s/
Clerk of Court

competitive environment, with neighboring islands and countries competing with us for the same airlines to fly to our destinations,” he said. “Participating in these types of B2B events ensures that we are top of mind for airlines that are looking for new routes or destinations. They also allow us to stay abreast of industry trends, so we don't fall behind our competitors.”

The forum was attended by CPA board chair Joe Ayuyu, MVA board member Ivan Quichocho, Concepcion, CPA managing director Leo Tude-la, and MVA marketing manager Thomas Kim. (PR)

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Attorneys for Administratrix


IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF) CIVIL ACTION
THE ESTATE OF) NO. 19-0237
PEDRO SANTOS BLAS,)
Deceased,)
Date: April 4, 2024
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Judge: Hon. Joseph M. Camacho


TO: ALL HEIRS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES, AND CREDITORS OF PEDRO SANTOS BLAS, DECEASED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Administratrix Leonora A. Blas has filed with this Court a Petition for Decree of Final Distribution in the Estate of Pedro Santos Blas, and that the Petition for Decree of Final Distribution will be heard at 10:00 a.m./p.m. on Thursday, April 4, 2024, at Superior Court, at room 220, on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.


/s/
Clerk of Court



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL



RFP NO.: DPW24-RFP No.: 42400062
SUBMISSION DATE: April 09, 2024 TIME: 10:00 A.M.
“Hearing Officer for the Department of Public Works, Saipan”
COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.
THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.
The project package will be available on or after **March 06, 2024** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.
There will be a **Pre-Proposal** Conference for this project on **April 22, 2024, 9:00 a.m. local time** at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 p.m. local time on April 28, 2024** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.
THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.
/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
Secretary, DPW
/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program



JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary	Opening Date	Closing Date
2024-008	CDBG-DR Compliance Specialist (1-Position) <i>Re-Announcement</i>	UNGRADED \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00 Per annum	JVA CANCELLED 03/18/2024	
2024-009	CDBG-DR Accountant (1-Position) <i>Re-Announcement</i>	UNGRADED \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00 Per annum	March 15, 2024	March 30, 2024 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdrc.com.


Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.


It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP24-GOV-42400067: PROVISION OF LABOR, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE MONITORING SERVICES FOR THE POST-CLOSURE MAINTENANCE OF THE PUERTO RICO DUMPSITE
SUBMISSION DATE: 10:00 AM ChST APRIL 19, 2024
Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), are soliciting sealed proposals for the Provision of Labor, Materials and Equipment for the Monitoring Services for the Post-Closure Maintenance of the Puerto Rico Dumpsite funded through the 702 Covenant funding by the Office of Insular Affairs, US Department of Interior.
The project package will be available in digital format only beginning **March 20, 2024** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours or online at Vendor Self Service (selfservice.dof.gov/mp/vss/Vendors/VBids). Proposals must precisely follow the submittal requirements identified in the Scope of Work.
A Pre-Proposal Meeting will be held via Google Meet at **10:00 AM on April 4, 2024**. Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted via email to Ms. Skalan V. Yamada at syamada.cip@gmail.com no later than **4:00 PM ChST April 11, 2024**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective proposers.
Proposers located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent Form to the Acting Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST April 19, 2024**.
Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria: (1) Qualifications and experience on similar projects – 30%; (2) Past performance with CNMI projects – 30%; and (3) Cost – 40%.
THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.
/S/ Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI
/S/ Brien S. Nicholas Jr., Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

Business

IN FIRST PUNISHMENT FOR WALKOUTS

South Korea will suspend licenses of 2 senior doctors

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korean authorities will suspend the licenses of two senior doctors for allegedly inciting the weeklong walkouts by thousands of medical interns and residents that have disrupted hospital operations, one of the doctors said Monday.

The impending suspensions are the punishments against physicians after more than 90% of the country's 13,000 doctors-in-training walked off the job last month to protest the government's plan to sharply increase medical school admissions.

Officials say the recruitment plan is aimed at adding more doctors to prepare for South Korea's rapidly aging population in a country whose doctor-to-population ratio is one of the lowest in the developed world. But doctors say schools can't handle an abrupt, steep increase in students, and that it would ultimately undermine the country's medical services.

In early March, the government began taking steps to suspend the licenses of striking junior doctors after they refused its orders to return to work by the end of February. Police are separately investigating five senior members of the Korean Medical Association, which represents doctors in South Korea, for allegedly inciting and abetting the strikes.

Park Myung-Ha, one of the five members, said he received a government-sent letter saying that his license will be suspended for three months from April 15. Park, who works for the KMA's emergency committee, said committee leader Kim Taek-woo was also given a three-month suspension.

The Health Ministry said it wouldn't confirm any reported administrative steps imposed on individual doctors.

"My fellow doctors and I are really angered and appalled by the government's measure," Park told The Associated Press.

Park accused the government of attempting to break up the KMA emergency committee and sending a warning message to striking junior doctors. He said he and others are discussing legal steps to respond to the license suspensions.

About 12,000 junior doctors have been off the job for a month, but none has received a license suspension. Observers have said it would take a few months to suspend all their licenses and that the government would likely end up suspending only strike leaders.

The striking junior doctors account for less than 10% of South Korea's 140,000 doctors. But in some major hospitals, they represent about 30%-40% of the doctors, as-

sisting senior doctors during surgeries and dealing with inpatients while training.

Their strikes have caused hundreds of canceled or postponed surgeries and other treatments, but officials say the country's handling of emergency and critical patients largely remains stable.

Senior doctors at major university hospitals recently decided to submit resignations next week in support of the junior doctors. Still, most of them will likely continue to report to work. If they walk off the job, that would burden South Korea's medical services severely.

In a briefing earlier Monday, Vice Health Minister Park Min-soo urged senior doctors to cancel their plans and persuade the striking junior doctors to return to work.

"Under any circumstances, you must not use the lives of the people for negotiations," Park said.

In early February, the government said it would increase the country's medical school enrollment quota by 2,000 starting next year, from the current cap of 3,058 that has been unchanged since 2006.

Officials say more doctors are required to address a longstanding shortage of physicians in rural areas and in essential yet low-paying specialties.

SC seems favorable to Biden administration over efforts to combat social media posts

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Supreme Court seemed likely Monday to side with the Biden administration in a dispute with Republican-led states over how far the federal government can go to combat controversial social media posts on topics including COVID-19 and election security in a case that could set standards for free speech in the digital age.

The justices seemed broadly skeptical during nearly two hours of arguments that a lawyer for Louisiana, Missouri and other parties presented accusing officials in the Democratic administration of leaning on the social media platforms to unconstitutionally squelch conservative points of view.

Lower courts have sided with the states, but the Supreme Court blocked those rulings while it considers the issue.

Several justices said they were concerned that common interactions between government officials and the plat-

forms could be affected by a ruling for the states.

In one example, Justice Amy Coney Barrett expressed surprise when Louisiana Solicitor General J. Benjamin Aguiñaga questioned whether the FBI could call Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) to encourage them to take down posts that maliciously released someone's personal information without permission, the practice known as doxxing.

"Do you know how often the FBI makes those calls?" Barrett asked, suggesting they happen frequently.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh also signaled that a ruling for the states would mean that "traditional, everyday communications would suddenly be deemed problematic."

The case Monday was among several the court is considering that affect social media companies in the context of free speech. Last week, the court laid out standards for

when public officials can block their social media followers. Less than a month ago, the court heard arguments over Republican-passed laws in Florida and Texas that prohibit large social media companies from taking down posts because of the views they express.

The cases over state laws and the one that was argued Monday are variations on the same theme, complaints that the platforms are censoring conservative viewpoints.

The states argue that White House communications staffers, the surgeon general, the FBI and the U.S. cybersecurity agency are among those who coerced changes in online content on social media platforms.

Aguiñaga put the situation in stark terms, telling the justices that "the record reveals unrelenting pressure by the government to coerce social media platforms to suppress the speech of millions of Americans."

Nation

Trump is making Jan. 6 attack cornerstone of White House bid



AP
Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump salutes at a campaign rally March 16, 2024, in Vandalia, Ohio.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republican Donald Trump has launched his general election campaign not merely rewriting the history of the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol attack, but positioning the violent siege and its failed attempt to overturn the 2020 election as a cornerstone of his bid to return to the White House.

At a weekend rally in Ohio, his first as the presumed Republican Party presidential nominee, Trump stood on-stage, his hand raised in salute to the brim of his red MAGA hat, as a recorded chorus of prisoners in jail for their roles in the Jan. 6 attack sang the national anthem.

An announcer asked the crowd to please rise "for the horribly and unfairly treated January 6th hostages." And people did, and sang along.

"They were unbelievable patriots," Trump said as the

recording ended.

Having previously vowed to pardon the rioters, he promised to help them "the first day we get into office."

Initially relegated to a fringe theory on the edges of the Republican Party, the revisionist history of Jan. 6, which Trump amplified during the early days of the GOP primary campaign to rouse his most devoted voters, remains a rally centerpiece even as he must appeal more broadly to a general election audience.

In heaping praise on the rioters, Trump is shifting blame for his own role in the run-up to the bloody mob siege and asking voters to absolve hundreds of them—and himself—over the deadliest attack on a seat of American power in 200 years.

At the same time, Trump's allies are installing 2020 election-deniers to the Republican

National Committee, further institutionalizing the lies that spurred the violence. That raises red flags about next year, when Congress will again be called upon to certify the vote.

And they're not alone. Republicans in Congress are embarking on a re-investigation of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack that seeks to shield Trump of wrongdoing while lawmakers are showcasing side theories about why thousands of his supporters descended on Capitol Hill in what became a brutal scene of hand-to-hand combat with police.

Five people died in the riot and its aftermath.

Taken together, it's what those who study authoritarian regimes warn is a classic case of what's called consolidation—where the state apparatus is being transformed around a singular figure, in this case Trump.

Supreme Court extends block on Texas law that would allow police to arrest migrants

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Supreme Court on Monday continued to block, for now, a Texas law that would give police broad powers to arrest migrants suspected of illegally entering the U.S. while the legal battle it sparked over immigration authority plays out.

A one-page order signed by Justice Samuel Alito indefinitely prevents Texas from enforcing a sweeping state immigration enforcement law that had been set to take effect this month. The language of the order strongly suggests the court will take additional action, but it is unclear when.

It marks the second time Alito has extended a pause on the law, known as Senate Bill 4, which the Justice Department has argued would step

on the federal government's immigration powers. Monday's order extending the stay came a few minutes after a 5 p.m. deadline the court had set for itself, creating momentary confusion about the measure's status.

Opponents have called the law the most dramatic attempt by a state to police immigration since an Arizona law more than a decade ago, portions of which were struck down by the Supreme Court. The court battle is unfolding as immigration emerges as a key issue in the 2024 presidential race.

The office of Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has said the state's law mirrored federal law and "was adopted to address the

ongoing crisis at the southern border, which hurts Texans more than anyone else."

Arrests for illegal crossings along the southern border hit record highs in December but fell by half in January, a shift attributed to seasonal declines and heightened enforcement by the U.S. and its allies. The federal government has not yet released numbers for February.

The Biden administration sued to strike down the Texas measure in January, arguing it's a clear violation of federal authority on immigration that would hurt international relations and create chaos in administering immigration law. Critics have also said the law could lead to civil rights violations and racial profiling.

Asia

Blinken to underline US' 'ironclad' support for PH

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Secretary of State Antony Blinken will underscore Washington's "ironclad commitment" to its alliance with the Philippines on Tuesday, as clashes between Chinese and Filipino forces in the disputed South China Sea turn more hostile, the U.S. State Department said.

Blinken, the latest high-level official to visit the U.S. treaty ally, met his Philippine counterpart, Enrique Manalo Tuesday, before planned meetings with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and other top officials in Manila.

Next month, President Joe Biden will host Marcos and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in a White House summit amid growing concerns over increasingly aggressive Chinese actions in the South China Sea and North Korea's nuclear program.

The Chinese coast guard blocked and used water cannons against Philippine vessels in a confrontation two weeks ago that slightly injured a Filipino admiral and four of his sailors near the disputed Second Thomas Shoal.

The March 5 faceoff in the high seas also caused two mi-

nor collisions between Chinese and Philippine vessels and prompted Manila's Department of Foreign Affairs to summon China's deputy ambassador to convey a protest against the Chinese coast guard's actions, which the Philippines said were unacceptable.

Washington renewed a warning after the hostilities that it is obligated to defend the Philippines if Filipino forces, ships or aircraft come under an armed attack anywhere in the South China Sea.

The Chinese coast guard said that "it took control measures in accordance with the law against Philippine ships that illegally intruded into the waters adjacent to Ren'ai Reef," the name Beijing uses for Second Thomas Shoal.

The Second Thomas Shoal, which is occupied by a small Philippine navy contingent but surrounded by Chinese coast guard ships and other allied vessels, was the site of several tense skirmishes between Chinese and Philippine coast guard ships last year. But Filipino officials said the confrontation earlier this month was particularly serious because of the injuries sustained by its navy personnel and

damage to their vessel.

In his meetings with Marcos and Manalo, Blinken will "advance shared economic priorities and underscore the United States' ironclad commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance," the State Department said.

They will "discuss areas to deepen U.S.-Philippine cooperation on a range of bilateral and global issues, including on regional peace and stability, human rights and democracy, economic prosperity" among others, the State Department said.

Outside the presidential palace, dozens of left-wing activists tore a mock U.S. flag in a noisy rally Tuesday to oppose Blinken's visit and U.S. involvement in the long-simmering territorial disputes.

Aside from China and the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei also have overlapping claims in the resource-rich and busy waterway, a key global trade route.

Beijing claims almost the entire South China Sea. In the last decade, China has turned barren reefs into seven islands that now serve as missile-protected island bases, including three with runways, that have bolstered its capability to fortify its territorial claims and patrols.

equipment in recent months to help fuel its war on Ukraine, saying that such arms transfers accelerated after a rare summit between Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin in September. North Korea in exchange possibly received badly needed food and economic aid and military assistance aimed at upgrading Kim's forces, according to South Korean officials and private experts. Both Moscow and Pyongyang have denied the existence of an arms deal between the countries.

Detention of 3 teens over gruesome killing of 13-year-old classmate sparks debate in China

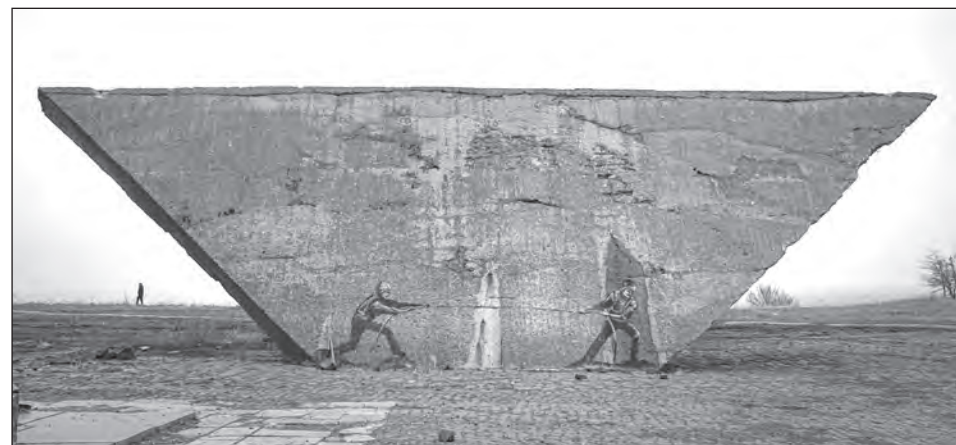
BEIJING (AP)—In the last recorded moments before the 13-year-old boy's death, surveillance cameras showed him sitting on a scooter, surrounded by three classmates. An hour later, his phone went dead, kicking off a frantic search by relatives. The following day, police in a village in central China made a sickening discovery: the boy's body, buried underneath a tarp in an abandoned vegetable greenhouse.

His three teenage classmates have been detained on suspicion of murdering the boy in a case that has riveted China, setting off outrage and frenzied debate over the young age of the suspects and soul-searching about bullying and social responsibility in the Chinese countryside. Police in Feixiang district of Handan city identified the boy only by his last name, Wang. In a statement Sunday they said the boy had been killed on March 10 and that the suspects were detained the following day. A police investigator told state broadcaster CCTV on Monday that the crime had been premeditated, with the suspects digging out the pit twice, once the day before and again the day of the killing. Wang's relatives and their attorney said in interviews with Chinese media and in posts on social media that the boy had long been a victim of bullying, and was forced to give money to one of his classmates before he was killed. They said police identified the suspected killers after reviewing the surveillance footage and questioning the classmates.

World

WITH ELECTION BEHIND HIM

Putin says Russia aims to set up buffer zone inside Ukraine



Ukrainian and Russian soldiers are depicted in a tug-of-war game on a memorial in Izium, Kharkiv region, Ukraine, Sunday, March 17, 2024.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said after extending his rule in an election that stifled opposition that Moscow will not relent in its invasion of Ukraine and plans to create a buffer zone to help protect against long-range Ukrainian strikes and cross-border raids.

The Kremlin's forces have made battlefield progress as Kyiv's troops struggle with a severe shortage of artillery shells and exhausted front-line units after more than two years of war. The front line stretches over 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) across eastern and southern Ukraine.

Advances have been slow and costly, and Ukraine has increasingly used its long-range firepower to hit oil refineries and depots deep inside Russia. Also, groups claiming to be Ukraine-based Russian opponents of the Kremlin have launched cross-border incursions.

"We will be forced at some point, when we consider it necessary, to create a certain 'sanitary zone' on the territories controlled by the (Ukrainian government)," Putin said late Sunday.

This "security zone," Putin said, "would be quite difficult to penetrate using the foreign-made strike assets at the enemy's disposal."

He spoke after the release of election returns that showed him securing a fifth six-year term in a landslide in an election devoid of any real opposition following his relentless crackdown on dissent.

Monday marks the 10th anniversary of Russia's seizure of Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula, which set the stage for Russia to invade its neighbor in February 2022. However, Putin has been vague about his goals in Ukraine since that full-scale invasion floundered.

Putin again warned the

West against deploying troops to Ukraine. A possible conflict between Russia and NATO would put the world "a step away" from World War III, he said.

French President Emmanuel Macron recently said that sending Western troops into Ukraine should not be ruled out, though he said the current situation does not require it.

Commenting on the prospects for peace talks with Kyiv, Putin reaffirmed that Russia remains open to negotiations but won't be lured into a truce that will allow Ukraine to rearm.

However, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has apparently shut the door on such talks, saying Putin should be brought to trial at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, which last year issued an arrest warrant for Putin on war crime charges. (AP)

Famine said to be 'imminent' in northern Gaza as Israel raids main hospital again

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—Famine is "imminent" in northern Gaza, where 70% of people are experiencing catastrophic hunger, according to a report Monday that warned escalation of the war could push half of Gaza's total population to the brink of starvation.

The report, by the international community's authority on determining the severity of hunger crises, came as Israel faces mounting pressure from even its closest allies to streamline the entry of aid into the Gaza Strip and to open more land crossings. Aid groups complain that deliveries by air and sea by the U.S. and other countries are too slow and too small.

The European Union's top diplomat said the impending famine was "entirely man-made" as "starvation is used as a weapon of war."

Israeli forces, meanwhile, launched another raid on the Gaza Strip's largest hospital early Monday, saying Hamas militants had regrouped there and fired on them from inside the Shifa Hospital compound. Clashes continued all day in and around the hospital, where Palestinian officials say tens of thousands of people have been sheltering.

The Israeli military said troops killed 20 people it identified as Hamas militants, and one of its own soldiers was killed, though the identification of the dead as

militants could not be confirmed. Among those killed was a senior commander in Gaza's Hamas-led police forces who Israel said was hiding in the hospital. Gaza officials said the commander was coordinating protection of aid convoys.

The army last raided Shifa Hospital in November after claiming that Hamas maintained an elaborate command center within and beneath the facility. The military revealed a tunnel leading to some underground rooms, as well as weapons it said were found inside the hospital. But the evidence fell short of the earlier claims, and critics accused the army of recklessly endangering the lives of civilians.

ASIAN BRIEFS

S. Korean defense chief says N. Korea has supplied 7,000 containers of munitions to Russia

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea has shipped around 7,000 containers filled with munitions and other military equipment to Russia since last year to help support its war in Ukraine, South Korea's defense minister said Monday. Shin Won-sik shared the assessment at a news conference hours after the South Korean and Japanese militaries said the North fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles into its eastern waters, adding to a streak of weapons displays amid growing tensions with rivals. Since the start of 2022, North Korea has used Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a distraction to ramp up its weapons tests and has also aligned with Moscow over the conflict, as leader Kim Jong Un tries to break out of diplomatic isolation and join a united front against the United States. U.S. and South Korean officials have accused North Korea of supplying Russia with artillery shells, missiles and other

Life & Style

A new Banksy mural sprouts beside a cropped tree in London

LONDON (AP)—A new Banksy mural drew crowds to a London street on Monday, even before the elusive graffiti artist confirmed that the work was his.

The artwork in the Finsbury Park neighborhood covers the wall of a four-story residential building and shows a small figure holding a pressure hose beside a large cherry tree. Green paint has been sprayed across the wall, replicating the absent leaves of the tree, which has been severely pruned in a technique known as pollarding.

Banksy claimed the work by posting before and after photos of the location on his official Instagram account.

The new attraction drew a stream of onlookers who took photos and snapped selfies.



People look at a new Banksy painting on a wall in London, Monday, March 18, 2024. AP

Many discerned an environmental message in the vibrant green artwork, which appeared on Sunday—St. Patrick's Day.

"The tree looks very sad without branches and without greenery," said Pura Lawler, on her way to a gym class. She felt

Banksy was saying something about "destroying the forests, destroying the greenery."

Former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, who represents the area in Parliament, said the work "makes people stop and think, 'Hang on. We live in one world. We live in one environment. It is vulnerable and on the cusp of serious damage being done to it.'"

"Environmental politics is about densely populated urban areas like this, just as much as it is about farmland and woodland and hedges," he added.

Banksy, who has never confirmed his full identity, began his career spray-painting buildings in Bristol, England, and has become one of the world's best-known artists.

His mischievous and often satirical images include two policemen kissing, armed riot police with yellow smiley faces, and a chimpanzee with a sign bearing the words, "Laugh now, but one day I'll be in charge."

Banksy's work has sold for millions of dollars at auction, and past murals on outdoor

sites have often been stolen or removed by building owners soon after going up. In December, after Banksy stenciled military drones on a stop sign in south London, a man was photographed taking down the sign with bolt cutters. Police later arrested two men on suspicion of theft and criminal damage.

Ariana Grande and Dalton Gomez officially divorced

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ariana Grande and Dalton Gomez are now divorced.

A Los Angeles Superior Court judgment dissolving their marriage of nearly three years became official Tuesday, six months after the 30-year-old pop star file a pe-

tition to divorce the 28-year-old real estate broker.

The two separated more than a year ago, according to court papers. They had a pre-nuptial agreement, had no children and had no significant legal disputes in the split, allowing it to move quickly and cleanly through the court system.

The terms of their settlement were agreed upon in October, they had only to wait the required six months before a judge's order could take effect.

Under the agreement, Grande will make a onetime payment of \$1,250,000 to Gomez with no future alimony, give him half of the proceeds of the sale of their Los Angeles home, and will pay up to \$25,000 toward his attorneys' fees.

Like the vast majority of California divorces, Grande's petition cited irreconcilable differences as the reason for the split.

The couple began dating in January 2020, and quarantined together during the pandemic. They appeared together in the video for the Justin Bieber charity single "Stuck With U" in May of that year, and announced their engagement in December.

Grande and Gomez were married in a tiny private ceremony at her home in Montecito, California, on May 15, 2021.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Stolen 'Wizard of Oz' ruby slippers will go on an international tour and then be auctioned

A pair of ruby slippers worn by Judy Garland in "The Wizard of Oz" were returned to their owner, nearly 20 years after the iconic shoes were stolen from a museum in the late actor's hometown. But "No place like home?" Not exactly. The memorabilia collector who owns the iconic footwear immediately turned them over to an auction company, which plans to take them on an international tour before offering them at auction in December, an official with Dallas-based Heritage Auctions said Monday. The ruby slippers were at the heart of the beloved 1939 musical. Garland's character, Dorothy, danced down the Yellow Brick Road in her shiny shoes, joined by the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion. To return home to Kansas, she had to click the heels three

times and repeat, "There's no place like home." In reality, Garland wore several pairs during filming. Only four remain. (AP)

Singer R. Kelly seeks appeals court relief from 30-year prison term

NEW YORK (AP)—R. Kelly's lawyer told an appeals court Monday that all kinds of legitimate organizations—even college fraternities—could be deemed racketeering organizations under a law used to convict the R&B superstar at his Brooklyn trial of sexually abusing young fans, including children, for decades. Attorney Jennifer Bonjean, seeking to reverse his 2021 convictions or to win him a new trial, tried to persuade three judges on the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan that prosecutors improperly used a racketeering statute written to shut down organized crime to go after the singer. She said it wasn't fair that

prosecutors charged Kelly, 57, with leading a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) enterprise from 1994 to 2018 compromised of individuals who promoted his music and recruited women and girls to engage in illegal sexual activity and to produce child pornography. "This was not a collection of people who had a purpose to recruit girls for sexual abuse or child pornography," Bonjean said. "Whether they turned a blind eye, whether some of them suspected that some of these girls were underage, that's a whole different matter."

London home of Freddie Mercury bought in 1980 is for sale, minus his 'exquisite clutter'

LONDON (AP)—Freddie Mercury's sanctuary in London, where he lived the last decade of his life, is on sale for the first time in nearly half a century—minus his "exqui-

site clutter." Garden Lodge, as the neo-Georgian brick home in the posh Kensington neighborhood is known, is for sale by Knight Frank for offers exceeding 30 million pounds (\$38 million). It is not publicly listed. Mercury, the frontman for Queen, bought the house in 1980—the year the band's album "The Game," with hits "Another One Bites the Dust" and "Crazy Little Thing Called Love," topped the charts. He reportedly paid cash for the property, which was listed for more than 500,000 pounds, according to "Mercury: An Intimate Biography of Freddie Mercury." "I saw the house, fell in love with it, and within a half an hour it was mine," Mercury boasted, according to the book.

Spotify paid \$9 billion in royalties in 2023

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Spotify paid out \$9 billion in streaming royalties last year,

the streaming giant said Tuesday in its latest "Loud and Clear" report. Spotify's fourth annual report, which originally launched in 2021 following criticism over its lack of transparency, noted record accomplishments, including the highest annual payment from any retailer to the music industry. "This is everything we know about how much is being paid out, how many artists are achieving different levels of success," says Charlie Hellman, the vice president and global head of music product at Spotify. "So, everyone can have access to the information and be sort of up to date with the state of the industry." According to the data, 1,250 artists generated over \$1 million each in recording and publishing royalties in 2023; 11,600 generated over \$100,000 and 66,000 generated over \$10,000—numbers that have almost tripled since 2017.

Bride-to-be walks a fine line for her bridesmaids

DEAR ABBY: I recently started planning my wedding. Half the friends I want as bridesmaids are very conservative. They think sex is sacred and should be talked about only discreetly, not joked about, mentioned on TV, etc. I used to hold similar views, but I no longer do. Neither do the other half of the girls I want as bridesmaids.

My dream bachelorette party is the kind you see in movies, a group of girls going out on the town getting tipsy—maybe being a little stupid—nothing dangerous, with sexy games/favors and casually swapping sex tips and double entendres. That may not be possible with my strait-laced friends, whom I really like and would like to include.

I pick up on others' feelings easily, so I can't ignore when someone around me is unhappy. I want all my girlfriends to enjoy the party, but two or three of them won't appreciate the humor of drinking from a phallus-shaped straw. Should I split the guest list and have one prudish party and one sexy one?

GOOD/BAD GIRL IN THE EAST

DEAR GIRL: That's an excellent idea! And we all know which one you are going to enjoy.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I just found out my husband has been texting with his high school sweetheart for the last three years. He con-

tacted her and shares all day-to-day activities, like our vacations, new dog, etc. She lives 2,500 miles away. She's divorced, retired like us and has children and grandchildren. I snooped and read his email. I can tell by her responses that she is being polite.

I don't understand why he contacted her after so many years and why he shares everything with her, as we have a close relationship and share everything. He did mention a year ago that he was in touch with her. I didn't think much about it then, but now that I know how long this has been going on, I'm wondering why. Should I be concerned about this?

PUZZLED IN MAINE

DEAR PUZZLED: What is happening could be innocent, or it could be crossing a line. You will never know until you discuss this with your husband. You MAY not have to disclose that you read the texts if you say you recalled him mentioning that they were in touch "a while back" and let the conversation evolve from there.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I recently received an Evite to a surrogate baby shower. I was happy to attend. Each guest was asked to bring a box of diapers, our favorite children's book and a donation to help cover the surrogate expenses. A written explanation of how expensive the surrogate process is was also included.

In my opinion, when the couple started the surrogacy process,

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



they were aware of how expensive it would be, and to ask the shower attendees to contribute to it is a little nervy. Was this proper etiquette?

WONDERING IN NEVADA

DEAR WONDERING: No. Soliciting the donation was over the top. I can't help but wonder how many invitees declined the invitation because of it. To ask for money was tacky.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

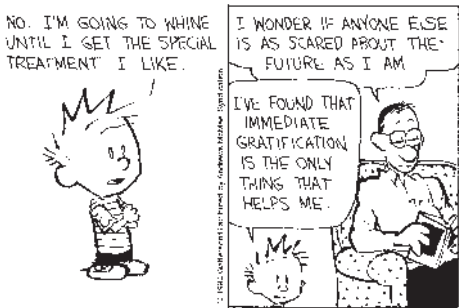
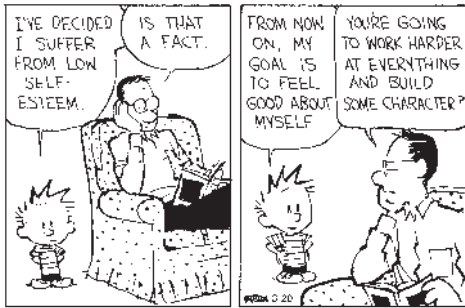
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 25 Swiss peaks 41 Drops on grass 10 Sheeran and org. 26 Secluded valley 12 Twangy Harris 4 Prof's helpers 27 Pirate's chart 1 Disney mermaid 14 Paris airport 7 Utah city 28 Bitter 2 Butte's kin 15 Thither orders 30 Freudian 3 Revised 19 ICU 10 Bee-thoven's 33 007 4 Church workers 20 Black "Für — " 33 007 5 Poker gold 21 Allege 11 Reach in 13- payments 22 Seem 13 2002 Across 6 Rating 23 German James Bond film 36 Rum unit 24 Nudged, weekend show 37 Hunk of cheese 8 Barbecue in a 38 Perch site 25 Pump 17 Loses moisture 39 Cupid's alias 9 Protective up the 18 Equal 40 Three, in house volume (Pref.) Rome exterior 26 Ledger entry 19 Move, in Realtor lingo 28 Thes-pian 29 Stop 30 Fund 31 Jokes 32 Low digit 23 Katherine of "27 Dresses" 34 Mob scene 35 Withered

Solution time: 23 mins.

Last Friday's Answer

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Ruby Rose, 38; Kathy Ireland, 61; Holly Hunter, 66; Spike Lee, 67.

Happy Birthday: Bask in the light, offer words of wisdom and be grateful for all that comes your way. Your generosity of heart and your hands-on help bring life to everything you touch. Be open, receptive and willing to implement changes that will bring you to a safe and sound place. If you wish to be happy, take charge. Your numbers are 8, 15, 21, 27, 33, 36, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Dream and believe. Take the power within and do something to improve your space and the world around you. Be brave, change what you don't like and head in a direction that soothes the soul and brings you joy. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): An intuitive approach to how you respond will ward off overreacting. Being able to adjust on the go will encourage others to follow. Understanding the dynamics of a situation will help you make better decisions. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Control your emotions; don't overreact or participate in gossip. Focus on your responsibilities, finishing what you start and honing your skills to ensure you outperform anyone who wants to compete with you. Don't let anyone limit you. ★★★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Doing things your way is OK. Routine is exemplary, but if you follow your instincts, you'll discover that something you enjoy doing can also earn extra cash. Don't let

outsiders goad you into something that doesn't support your needs. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Switch gears, use intelligence and fine-tune what you enjoy doing. Opportunity suggests looking closely at the changes around you and plugging into how you can use your skills to capitalize on what's important to you. Choose the path that feels like home. ★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): If you feel it in your heart and it fits into your budget, carry on and don't look back. Trust your instincts and take a journey that impacts how you move forward. A commitment will encourage stability, gratification and strength of character. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Open discussions that lead to knowledge, understanding and what you can do to improve your situation. Being willing to listen, evaluate and make sense of what others want will bring about better decisions. Don't let emotions cost you. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Considering what's best for you and fortifying your home environment from unwanted change will soothe the nerves. A shift in attitude will reflect your emotions and encourage you to let go of what's holding you back. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Protect yourself from anyone trying to push you in a direction that doesn't fit your timetable. Choose the path that encourages you to share your feelings and head in a direction that allows you to explore what makes you happy. ★★★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Do the work yourself. Fix up your space to suit your needs. Rearrange and create an environment that promotes success, gratification and opportunity. Look for bargains, keep your overhead low and proceed with a strict budget. ★★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Be careful who you trust. Only some people will share your values or support your goals. Ask questions, verify plans and change what's necessary, and you'll maintain financial stability, emotional control and the ability to make changes without interference. ★★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Evaluate how you handle your relationships, money matters and staying updated. Incorporating the latest trends into your everyday routine will give you an edge in recruiting interest; however, be careful not to let the additions drown you in debt. Test first, find out what's valuable and eliminate dead weight. ★★
Birthday Baby: You are authentic, proactive and quick-witted. You are opportunity-driven and frugal.

★: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ★★: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ★★★: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ★★★★★: Aim high; start new projects. ★★★★★: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

	3		9	1	5	7	8	2
5	9	8		7				
	2	1				9	5	3
	8	4			6			
6	1	2		3		5		8
			5	2				
2				8	3			
						8	3	6
	6		5				2	

Difficulty: ★★★

3/20

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

5	1	9	4	2	8	3	7	6
2	8	6	1	7	3	9	4	5
3	7	4	9	5	6	8	1	2
9	3	1	2	8	5	7	6	4
6	5	2	7	4	9	1	3	8
7	4	8	6	3	1	2	5	9
1	9	7	5	6	2	4	8	3
4	6	3	8	9	7	5	2	1
8	2	5	3	1	4	6	9	7

Difficulty: ★★

3/19

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

BRIAN MULRONEY (1939-2024)

Solution: 10 letters

O	T	R	E	A	E	L	I	Z	A	B	E	T	H
T	R	E	S	T	L	A	V	A	L	Y	P	C	H
T	A	D	R	S	I	E	X	O	G	L	N	R	S
A	W	C	E	I	M	A	W	R	I	A	E	E	U
W	L	O	F	R	T	D	E	I	G	T	R	I	B
A	A	N	O	T	C	N	N	A	S	T	E	P	U
K	T	S	R	N	E	A	E	I	E	I	Y	A	R
I	S	E	M	E	A	R	N	T	C	A	W	R	I
M	H	R	S	C	M	I	A	A	C	O	A	T	N
C	S	V	M	A	M	M	R	I	D	H	L	Y	E
I	I	A	R	E	I	O	S	B	A	A	A	A	S
N	R	T	M	L	L	S	M	E	M	O	I	R	S
K	I	I	C	I	E	K	A	L	H	C	E	E	M
N	R	V	N	J	U	A	E	M	O	C	E	I	A
P	B	N	E	D	I	C	T	S	T	R	O	N	G

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www.wonderword.com

3/20

Baie-Comeau, Benedict, Brian, Bush, Businessman, Canada, Caroline, Centrist, Charm, Climate, Conservative, Elizabeth, Energy, GST, Irish, Jessica, Laval, Lawyer, Leader, Lewis, Mark, Martin, Meach Lake, Memoirs, Milla, Miranda, Nicolas, Order, Ottawa, Palm Beach, Party, Pierce, Polls, Prime Minister, Readan, Reforms, Stalwart, Strong, Tax, Wakim
Last Friday's Answer: Computers
The NEW Wonderword Grand Millennium #1 in LARGE PRINT is now available at: www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Celtics defeat Pistons behind Brown's 31 points, White's triple-double



BOSTON (AP)—Jaylen Brown scored 31 points in three quarters, Derrick White posted his first career triple-double and the NBA-best Boston Celtics beat the Detroit Pistons 119-94.

Boston star Jayson Tatum missed the game because of a right ankle injury, but the Celtics had more than enough to make up for the absence of their leading scorer (27.1 points a game) and rebounder (8.3).

White had 22 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. He completed his triple-double when he passed to Payton Pritchard, who hit a 3-pointer with 6:25 to play.

Pritchard had 23 points in the Celtics' sixth straight victory.

Boston forward Kristaps Porzingis returned after missing five games with a strained right hamstring. He had 20 points and eight rebounds in 22 minutes.

Jaden Ivey led Detroit with 21 points. Cade Cunningham, who averages a team-high 22.2 points per game, rested for left knee injury management.

CAVALIERS 108, PACERS 103

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Caris LeVert and Jarrett Allen each scored 23 points and a short-handed Cleveland defeated the Indiana 108-103.

Cleveland led by as many as nine in the final quarter before Indiana pulled even with 2:05

Boston Celtics' Derrick White reacts after making a 3-pointer during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Detroit Pistons, Monday, March 18, 2024, in Boston.



remaining. LeVert drove baseline then pulled up and swished a 9-foot fadeaway jumper to regain the lead. The Pacers didn't score again.

LeVert had 11 assists and eight rebounds. Allen had nine rebounds.

The Cavaliers were without three starters including guard Donovan Mitchell, who averages a team-high 27.4 points but was a late scratch with a nose injury. The absences necessitated signing veteran forward Marcus Morris Sr. to a 10-day contract. Morris scored 14 off the bench.

Former Raptors star Pascal Siakam led the Pacers with 19 points and 12 rebounds. All-Star Tyrese Haliburton had 14 points and 12 assists. Reserve guard T.J. McConnell scored 14.

76ERS 98, HEAT 91

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Tyrese Maxey had 30 points and 10 assists and Kelly Oubre Jr. had 22 points and 11 rebounds to help Philadelphia hold off Miami Heat 98-91 in a potential preview of an NBA play-in tournament game.

Former Raptors point guard Kyle Lowry survived a hard tumble over the scorer's table and scored 16 points for the Sixers in his first game against the Heat since they traded him in January.

Bam Adebayo had 20 points and 13 rebounds for the Heat. Terry Rozier III scored 20 points.

BULLS 110, TRAIL BLAZERS 107

CHICAGO (AP)—Onetime Raptors star DeMar DeRozan scored 28 points and Nikola Vucevic made a key hook shot with 9.3 seconds left, helping the Chicago edge Portland 110-107.

Vucevic had 22 points and nine rebounds in Chicago's third win in four games. Ayo Dosunmu finished with 23 points and 10 assists.

Anfernee Simons scored 12 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter for Portland, but he missed a 3 from the top of the key as time expired. Deandre Ayton had 25 points and 15 rebounds in his sixth consecutive game with at least 20 points.

TIMBERWOLVES 114, JAZZ 104

SALT LAKE CITY, (AP)—Anthony Edwards had 32 points, eight assists and seven rebounds to lead the Minnesota over the Utah 114-104.

Naz Reid added 17 points on 7-of-12 shooting but did not play after halftime due to a head injury. Reid's absence further depleted a Minnesota frontcourt already missing Rudy Gobert and Karl-Anthony Towns because of injuries.

The Timberwolves scored 27 points off 17 turnovers and beat Utah for the second time in three days.

Collin Sexton led Utah with 24 points. Lauri Markkanen had 22 points and 12 rebounds following a six-game absence due to a bruised right quadriceps. Keyonte George added 15

points and eight assists.

John Collins had 11 points and six rebounds for the Jazz in three quarters. Collins did not play in the fourth while being evaluated for a concussion.

KNICKS 119, WARRIORS 112

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Jalen Brunson scored 34 points and Miles McBride added a career-high 29 to lead the New York to their fourth straight win over the Golden State.

The Knicks raced out to an 18-4 lead early in the game and never trailed as they earned just their fifth win in their last 19 meetings against the Warriors.

Josh Hart had 10 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists for his fifth triple-double in the past 21 games for New York, while playing all 48 minutes. Donte DiVincenzo added 18 points for the Knicks.

Stephen Curry scored 27 points to lead Golden State and Trayce Jackson-Davis added 19 points and 10 rebounds. The Warriors fell to 17-18 at home this season.

LAKERS 136, HAWKS 105

LOS ANGELES (AP)—LeBron James had 25 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds, and D'Angelo Russell scored 27 points while tying the Lakers' single-season record for 3-pointers in a 136-105 victory over Atlanta.

Russell's six 3-pointers against the Hawks gave him 183 this season, passing Kobe Bryant's 180 in the 2005-06 season and tying Nick Van Exel's franchise record set in 1994-95.

Jalen Johnson scored 25 points and Bogdan Bogdanovic had 17 for the Hawks, who have lost four of five overall and three of four on their West Coast road trip.

KINGS 121, GRIZZLIES 111, OT

SACRAMENTO (AP)—Malik Monk scored 12 of his 28 points in overtime, Domantas Sabonis had his 50th straight double-double and Sacramento beat Memphis.

Monk added six rebounds and six assists as the Kings improved to 5-1 in overtime. Sabonis finished with 25 points and 18 rebounds, and De'Aaron Fox had 23 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds.

GG Jackson scored the first basket of overtime to put Memphis in front before Monk scored eight in a row and assisted a dunk by Sabonis as part of a 12-0 run as the Kings outscored the Grizzlies 16-6 in the extra period.

Jaren Jackson Jr. led the Grizzlies with 25 points on 8-of-27 shooting. Desmond Bane added 24 points, and GG Jackson had 22.

Reigning NCAA champ UConn tops East Region bracket as No. 1 overall seed in March Madness



Connecticut opened the season with uncertainty about how well the Huskies would replace major pieces from last year's run to the national championship.

Any questions had been answered well before Selection Sunday.

The second-ranked Huskies (31-3) will enter the NCAA Tournament as the overall No. 1 seed, headlining the East Region bracket that runs close to home. And they've spent long stretches of this season looking like a runaway train in overpowering opponents and chasing college basketball's first repeat title in 17 years.

They will start with their first top regional seed since a Final Four run in 2009 and a sixth time overall. The five-time champions open play Friday against 16th-seeded Stetson in New York.

"I know we've never gotten a No. 1 overall seed in program history," coach Dan Hurley said after the Huskies won their first Big East Tournament title since 2011 on Saturday night, "so this is a group that seems to be making history in a place that it's hard to make history."

Hurley's analysis went a step

further, adding that UConn has "clearly been the best program in the country this year."

It's hard to argue otherwise.

UConn leads the country in KenPom's adjusted offensive efficiency rankings entering Sunday's final pre-tournament games, averaging 126.6 points per 100 possessions for the best output since 2018 champ Villanova (127.8). The Huskies also rank in adjusted defensive efficiency (94.4), joining Arizona and Auburn as the only teams to rank in the top 15 of both categories.

The team lost Final Four most outstanding player Adama Sanogo and sharpshooting guard Jordan Hawkins from last year's title run as a No. 4 seed, with all six wins by 13+ points. Yet Tristen Newton has elevated into a lead scorer, the 7-foot-2 Donovan Clingan remains an imposing yet nimble presence, while new additions like Cam Spencer (transfer) and Stephon Castle (freshman) have the Huskies rolling again.

UConn leads the country in KenPom's adjusted offensive efficiency rankings entering Sunday's final pre-tournament games, averaging 126.6 points per 100 possessions for the best output since 2018 champ Villanova (127.8). The Hus-

kies also rank in adjusted defensive efficiency (94.4), joining Arizona and Auburn as the only teams to rank in the top 15 of both categories.

"There's just not a lot of holes in the way that we play," Hurley said.

UConn has lost once since Dec. 20 with its last eight wins coming by an average margin of 21.2 points. The Huskies are poised to return to the No. 1 ranking in Monday's AP Top 25 poll, which will stand until a final edition comes April 9 after the NCAA championship game in Glendale, Arizona.

The question now is whether UConn can become the first to win back-to-back champs since Florida in 2006 and 2007.

THE TOP CHALLENGERS

Seventh-ranked Iowa State grabbed the No. 2 seed as the top contender, blowing out Houston—the South Region's top seed—in the Big 12 Tournament's title game for a second win against the Cougars this year.

The Cyclones (27-7) have the top-ranked defense in KenPom, allowing just 87.1 points per 100 possessions. They open Thursday against No. 15 seed South Dakota State in Omaha, Nebraska.

The other top challengers are No. 13 Illinois (26-8) as the No. 3 seed and 12th-ranked Auburn (27-7) as the 4. Illinois faces No. 14 seed Morehead State, while Auburn plays 13th-seeded Yale.

The Cyclones (Big 12), Illini (Big Ten) and Tigers (Southeastern Conference) all won their league tournaments this week.

FOLLOW-UP ACT

Two of last year's surprise Final Four teams—national runner-up San Diego State and Florida Atlantic—have reunited with the Huskies in this bracket.

The Aztecs (24-10) are the No. 5 seed with a first-round matchup against No. 12 seed UAB on Friday in Spokane, Washington. The Owls (25-8) hold the No. 8 seed and face ninth-seeded Northwestern in Brooklyn on Friday, setting up a potential second-round date with the Huskies.

WELCOME IN

Washington State and Duquesne are back in the field after lengthy waits.

The seventh-seeded Cougars (24-9) open against 10th-seeded Drake on Thursday in Omaha for the program's first trip to the NCAAAs since 2008,

when current Virginia coach Tony Bennett led Washington State to the Sweet 16.

As for the 11th-seeded Dukes (24-11), they're in the field for the first time in nearly a half-century. Duquesne's Atlantic 10 title run secured the program's first bid since 1977 and face No. 6 seed BYU in Omaha on Thursday.

SHOTMAKERS

There are multiple big-time scorers in the bracket, starting with Illinois' Terrence Shannon Jr. He's third nationally in scoring at 22.6 points per game, including 40 points against Nebraska and then 34 more against Wisconsin to close out the Big Ten tourney.

There's also Drake's Tucker DeVries (sixth at 21.8) and Stetson's Jalen Blackmon, who is ranked 10th nationally (21.5) and had 43 points against Austin Peay in the Atlantic Sun title game to secure that program's first-ever NCAA bid.

ROAD TO GLENDALE

The regionals will be held in Boston, about 85 miles to the southwest of the Huskies' Storrs campus. The Huskies are the favorite to win the national title, according to FanDuel Sportsbook. (AP)

Dial Rent-to-Own donates \$5K to NMC Foundation



As part of its long-standing commitment

to higher education in the CNMI, Dial Rent-to-Own recently donated \$5,000 to the Northern Marianas College Foundation for the upcoming Golf Open on March 23 and 24, 2024.

"At Dial Rent-to-Own, we understand the power of education, and we are glad to be a part of this year's golf open with our \$5,000 donation to help advance higher education in our islands," said Dial Rent-to-Own store manager Miguel Duenas.

NMC's tournament will be a two-day event at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort and the



NMC

Dial Rent-to-Own recently donated \$5,000 to the Northern Marianas College Foundation, in support of its upcoming Golf Open on March 23 and 24, 2024. In photo with NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, are Dial Rent-to-Own Saipan store manager Miguel Duenas, Dial Rent-to-Own Saipan assistant store manager Alex Villazon, NMC student Richard Baleares, and NMC Office of Student Activities and Leadership Program manager Maia Pangelinan.

4th Annual Women's 5K/10K run this Saturday

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER



In celebration of International Women's Day 2024, the Northern Marianas Athletics 4th Annual Women's 10K Run 2024 is set for this Saturday, March 24.

The race is at 6am and the course is the Saipan Marathon 10K course that starts at Hyatt Regency Saipan, then heads north to Puerto Rico and back.

Along with the 10K race is a women's only 5K, and a mixed female/male 5K Fun

Run/Walk with pram/stroller.

Finisher medals will be given to participants of the 10K run and the age divisions are U18 to 65 and older.

"Thank you Run Saipan board members for agreeing to yield your regular scheduled

events to support our NMI Women's Run," said Northern Marianas Athletics general secretary Robin Sapong.

In last year's run, Dr. Lily Muldoon was first with a time of 43:34. A close second was Akiko Miller at 43:42, and

third place was Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez at 45:53.

For more information and to sign up for the event, go to <https://raceroster.com/events/2024/84134/nmi-10km-womens-run/>.

All proceeds go to NMA's road to 2024 international events.



LAO ZHANG

Participants of the Northern Marianas Athletics 3rd Annual Women's 10K Run 2023 pose for a photo at the start/finish line at the Hyatt Regency Saipan parking lot.

NMI

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Singapore time, or 10:35pm local time.

On how the women's team is feeling heading to the tourney, Kaia Travilla said, "It's a great feeling to be able to play basketball and represent the NMI while doing it."

"I'm confident that my team and I will do really well as I know the chemistry we have together on and off the court is good. I believe that's one of the most important things," she said.

The goal? "Play our hardest and show what NMI basketball can bring. I look forward to the overall experience that my teammates and I will be able to gain for the opportunity of playing in the Asia Cup 2024 and also for the many opportunities this can open up for basketball in the NMI," said Travilla.

Basa, for his part, said, "We expect massive competition that we've never experienced before... We expect to play against giants." He thanked coach Rufino Aguon for allowing them to practice 3x3 aspects along with the regular 5v5, and Basa said

they'll be focusing on 3x3 more heading into the tourney.

He said their strength is speed—with Schmidt and Lizama—along with their shooting. "We've been scouting the teams through YouTube. We noticed that they're big but they don't shoot as much, so we're hoping we can exchange twos for ones down there. As long as we make our shots, I think we have a chance to perform well."

As for NMIBF being able to send teams to compete in the NMI's first 3x3 FIBA Asia Cup, Basa said, "It's amazing. Big shoutout to the basketball federation, James Lee, David Apatang, Marlene [Lumabi], and the rest of them. Basketball is fun and our people enjoy it, but opportunities like this really bring hope to a lot of the youth and for them to look forward to something. That's what we want—those that have played basketball to continue it, and have our kids fall in love with the game as well."

Coordinator of the NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series, Joe Villacrusis, said that the team is ready to go. The team will be making



LEIGH GASES

From left, Trail Glaziers' Jan Travilla, Kaia Travilla, Mikki Kautz, and Madeleine Alegre pose for a photo after they won a championship game of the NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

their way to Singapore on Tuesday, March 26.

He said, "this is our first time. Our disadvantage is that we don't have enough experience, and it'll be a little bit of a culture shock... but we hope that maybe after the first game, they kind of brush it off and start playing their game. They're good, they just need the experience."

He added, "If we continue to send teams to the Asia Cup, maybe we can start to grow and get a better feel on how to advance."

The last 3x3 tourney NMI competed in was the 2017 Vanuatu Pacific Mini Games made up of Lizama, Basa, Schmidt, and Dan Barcinas.

In the region, there's a big push for the 3x3 format because it's more accessible, easier to run, and has a faster rate of play.

Besides the Asian Cup, the NMIBF is setting up a 3x3 team to compete in the upcoming Micronesian Games in Marshall Islands this June, and hopefully in the 2025 Palau Pacific Mini Games.

tournament fee for the 2024 golf open is \$250.

"On behalf of the NMC Foundation, we are thankful for Dial Rent-to-Own's donation to our upcoming Golf Open," said Ben Babauta, chairperson of the NMC Foundation.

The tournament, which is also the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds to build and equip modern, innovative campus facilities that will help expand the CNMI's workforce development efforts, stimulate economic growth, and provide

access to quality education for the residents of the CNMI.

Like previous tourneys, this upcoming tournament will feature thousands of dollars in amazing hole-in-one prizes such as a 2024 Lexus RX350 from Atkins Kroll, a 2023 Honda Civic Type R from Joteten Motors, a \$10,000 shopping spree from Top Shelf Wine and Spirits, a \$10,000 cash prize from Ambyth Shipping, a \$10,000 cash prize from Pacifica Insurance Underwriters Insurance Inc., and a \$3,000 cash prize from McDonald's of Saipan.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the College with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting Helen Camacho at helen.camacho@marianas.edu, Raynard Travilla at raynard.travilla@marianas.edu, or Miguel Dandan at miguel.dandan@marianas.edu.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit www.marianas.edu/golf. Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram ([nmc.proa](https://www.facebook.com/nmc.proa)) or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)

AYVEN

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blan Funkgub) have him practice when we have time and he fell in love with the sport really quick! He always talks about wanting to go full blast on his ATV."

Deleon Guerrero said they will let their son join the Marianas Racing Association races as long as his good grades are not affected by his new hobby.

"Good grades are a must! As long as he has good grades with a good attitude

he is allowed to race. We also bought him what he wanted which was ice cream after the race," she said.

Deleon Guerrero also thanked Malcom Omar and Paul and Mae Guerrero for providing the tents during last Sunday's race.

In the Mini ATV Class, Peyton Pangelinan topped the race with 50 points, followed by Kanoa Torres with 44 points.

Results of the other divisions of the March race will be published in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

TANIA

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I'm hoping that will help me prepare for the race," said Tan.

As to how she thinks she'll do in a much colder climate, she said, "I think living and training in Hawaii, in the warmth where it's also humid, will benefit me when I race in the cold weather in Serbia. People usually run faster times in cooler temperatures so I'm hoping that will also be the same for me!"

She said her expectation is just to do her best and represent the CNMI as proudly as she can.

"The World Championships in any sport is so tough. My fellow swimmers who competed recently in Doha and Fukuoka would know—you

have to compete against not only Olympians but Olympic gold medalists and World Champions. Because the level of competition is so high, all I can do is go out there and do my best to represent our islands proudly on the world stage," she said.

For his part, Northern Marianas Athletics coach Elias Rangamar said Tan and Zarinae Sapong, who shattered her PB in the recent 2024 World Athletics Indoor Championships, "Stand as the prominent figures representing NMA Athletics." He added, "Since going collegiate [Tan] has steadily been the face of athletics in the CNMI with stellar performances, most specifically at the Pacific Games this past year."



Celtics defeat Pistons behind Brown's 31 points, White's triple-double.

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Dial Rent-to-Own donates \$5K to NMC Foundation.

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Tania to rep NMI in Cross Country Championships

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The indefatigable Tania Tan is gearing up for the 2024 World Athletics Cross Country Championships in Belgrade, Serbia, on March 30.

The CNMI made its debut in World Athletics Cross Country Championships last year, with Tan and Sildrey Veloria as its representatives. The 22-year-old is once again competing in the 10K senior women's division, where she finished 82nd last year with a time of 44:41 and a mile pace of 7:12. The championships is comprised of the 10K senior men/

women division, the 8K junior men division, the 6K junior women division, and the 4x2K mixed relay division. Tan is currently a member of the cross country team as a graduate transfer to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. The two-time gold medalist at the 2023 Pacific Games is "super grateful" for her selection to compete at the championships. "It's not every day you get to compete at a world championship, representing your nation, amongst the best of the best so it's truly an honor," she said. Her preparation consists of incorporating more hills into her runs. "Running hillier routes and doing hill sprints throughout the week. See TANIA on Page 15



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Tania Tan, right, runs through the 10K course of the 2023 World Athletics Cross Country Championships in Bathurst, Australia.

NMI 3x3 hoops teams set for debut in FIBA Asia Cup



LEIGH GASES
From left, Team Nesian Built's Preston Basa, Douglas Schmidt, and Jack Lizama, and Coby Santos pose for a photo after a championship game of the Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Series at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The NMI men's and women's 3x3 teams are set and ready to go to Singapore for their debut in the 3x3 FIBA Asia Cup from March 27-31. The men's team is made up of Preston Basa, Jack Lizama, Douglas "Spider" Schmidt, and Coby Santos, while the women's team consists of Kaia Travilla, Jan Travilla, Mikki Kautz, and Madeleine Alegre. Accompanying the team is Lia Rangamar, coordinator of the Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series and a representative of the NMIBF. Both teams climbed to the top of the NMI Basketball Federation rankings after the few months-long NMIBF Marianas Arsenal 3x3 Basketball Series. The men's team named Team Nesian Built beat out 16 other teams throughout the whole series to bag the highest points of 190. The final game in the series was last Feb. 3. Meanwhile, the wom-

en's team named Team Glaziers clinched their division after racking up 180 points. The men's team is in Draw B with No. 9 Republic of Korea, No. 14 Indonesia, and No. 18 Sri Lanka, while the NMI women's team is in Draw C with No. 12 India, No. 18 Hong Kong, and No. 13 Indonesia. Their first qualifying draw game is on Wednesday, March 27, 11am Singapore time, or 1pm local time, against the Republic of Korea. They are then facing off against Sri Lanka that evening, 6:30pm Singapore time, or 8:30pm local time. On Thursday, March 28, they are challenging Indonesia at 12:45pm Singapore time, or 2:45pm local time. The women's team will first take on India on Wednesday, March 27, at 8:10pm Singapore time, or 10:10pm local time. Then on Thursday, March 28, at 7:20pm Singapore time, or 9:20pm local time, they are set to go against Hong Kong, China. On the same day, they are going up against Indonesia at 8:35pm See NMI on Page 15

Ayven Sablan takes Peewee ATV Class

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR



Ayvee Sablan proved to be the best newcomer in four wheels after topping the Peewee ATV Class of last Sunday's race in the 2024 "MOTO IV" Points Race Series at the Cowtown Race Park. The 5-year-old was lone rider in the division and went home with 50 points. Sablan, who goes to school at Golden Harvest International School, was

happy after the race. "I feel very happy and I hope I win the next race too! The course is good and it was too hot," he said. The Yamaha 50cc rider learned how to drive an ATV from his cousin, Nakoa Torres. He also thanked Team Ericco Racing and his family for supporting his burgeoning motocross career. Sablan's mother, Almina Deleon Guerrero, said they're just happy that their son fell in love with riding. "Me and his dad (Mark Sa-



TISHA FERRER
Ayvee Sablan in action in the Peewee ATV Class of last Sunday's race in the 2024 "MOTO IV" Points Race Series at the Cowtown Race Park.

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